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AN APPRECIATIVE LIFE

OF THE

RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF

BEACONSFIELD,

A Statesman of 'Light and Leading.'

WITH

PORTRAITS OF HIS CONTEMPORARIES.

EDITED BY CORNELIUS BROWN, F.R.S.L.
Author of several Historical and Biographical Works.

ILLUSTRATED WITH PERMANENT PHOTOGRAPHS.

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THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE TORY REFORM BILL.

'Deeds, not words.'—*Butler.*
'Tis deeds must win the prize.'—*Shakespeare.*

MR. DISRAELI was now (February, 1858) a second time Chancellor of the Exchequer; and there is no doubt he was more than ever capable of fulfilling the difficult and responsible duties of that arduous post with advantage to the country, if only his envious opponents, Whig and Radical, would have generously given him the chance. But on this occasion, as before, they combined to obstruct and thwart his proceedings in every possible way. This would not improbably have been the case under any circumstances. But their hostile machinations were, in this instance, all the more perplexing and obstructive from the ministry having a majority of the House against them. The conduct of the Liberal opposition was precisely that of the dog in the manger. They could not constitute a ministry of any stability out of their own serried coalescence of all sorts and conditions of latitudinarian and revolutionary Liberalism; and yet they would not, if they could help it, have the Conservatives to constitute one; so that, practically, could they have had their own will, the country might have been left without any ministry whatever, or, at any rate, without one that could maintain its proper position. The construction of a Conservative cabinet, at such a conjuncture, was an actual necessity. There was reason to believe that not a single member of it accepted office with any hope of its being more than temporary; and it may

not unreasonably be taken for granted that there was not one of them who would not rather have declined the hazardous and onerous experiment that at such a moment was unavoidable, but that refusal would have been a gross dereliction of public duty.

The first teasing importunity of their opponents that they had to encounter, and which was repeated almost day by day, was as to their policy. But how was it possible all at once to satisfy such an inquiry, beyond giving that general assurance which was implied by their character as a Conservative government, and which was expressed in the addresses to their constituencies but a short time before? We speak now of those who were in the House of Commons; for the Conservative Peers had neglected no public opportunity of declaring their general policy. Lord Derby in one house and Mr. Disraeli in the other, had answered *generally* the questions put to them: *particularly*, in their uncertain position, they could not, either conveniently to themselves, or properly as concerned the public interests, immediately do so. And this, from their first meeting Parliament, as again, and as a matter of necessity, her Majesty's ministers, was most unreasonably, not to say factiously, resented by the opposition as plainly and positively indicating that either they had no policy at all, or that, if they had, they dared not avow it.

Actions, however, as we all know, speak louder than words; and the action that the Conservative ministry took within a comparatively short period after settling down in their places, on a question that the opposition had urged more importunately than any other, clearly showed that they were prepared to perform even more earnestly than to promise. We allude to the still-clamoured-for parliamentary reform, a measure for which was being prepared to largely expand the constituencies, whilst yet it regulated and restrained that expansion on those Conservative principles which were deemed indispensable to make it safe and effectual as a measure of constitutional representation. Several more pressing matters of legislation had first, however, to be cleared away, some of them those which the

coalition ministries had not succeeded in disposing of: and various questions of foreign policy and arrangement, which their immediate predecessors in office had, in some instances, rather rashly meddled with, were treated of, on the whole, pretty much to the satisfaction of the House. We are confining our brief and hasty sketch of the more prominent parliamentary proceedings to the House of Commons, because it was there that Mr. Disraeli's sphere of official duty principally lay; and there also that it depended how long he was to be enabled to officiate as a minister of the crown. He took up Lord Palmerston's India Bill, and succeeded, with the co-operation of Lord John Russell, of all men in the House, in getting it into a practical shape; the threatened war with Austria, which Liberal intermeddling had occasioned, was a source of much perplexity with him in the conflicting opinions and desires he had to encounter in the House; some official schemes as to land-tenure in India, chiefly in Oude, which were opposed by the Board of Control, gave him and his colleagues in the cabinet trouble for awhile.

A bill introduced in the House of Commons for the admission of Jews to parliament, opposed as it was by Lord Derby and the Lord Chancellor (Lord Chelmsford), was another subject of dissension and difficulty. This latter question placed Mr. Disraeli in an extremely delicate and awkward position, and exposed him personally to much unfair reflection and unjust implication, in a solitary instance or two even from Conservatives. One hon. member, for example, somewhat severely criticised the whole House of Israel, past and present, declaring, *inter alia*, in order, of course, to further his excitement of a party prejudice on the subject, that 'even the first Jesuits were all Jews;' and quoting both the elder and the younger Disraeli for arguments against their admission to what professed to be a Christian legislature. It is true Mr. Disraeli was no longer a Jew, if ever, save by birth, he was one at all; yet he never withheld his sympathy with, or his veneration for, the ancient race, or ever denied or disparaged their claims as the descendants of Abraham, and, as such, peculiarly 'the people of God,' and 'the sheep of His

pasture,' as well as 'the work of His hands.' Mr. Disraeli himself, on a former occasion, had not shrunk from taking their part as an ancient and venerable people, and of whom he was a lineal descendant. In a speech in the House on the Oaths Bill, in 1854, he took occasion to remark of the Jews—'They are not a new people, who have just got into notice, and who, if you do not recognise their claims, may disappear. They are an ancient people, a famous people, an enduring people, and a people who in the end have generally attained their objects. I hope parliament may endure for ever, and sometimes I think it will; but I cannot help remembering that the Jews have outlived Assyrian kings, Egyptian Pharaohs, Roman Cæsars, and Arabian caliphs.' Again, in 'Coningsby,' although in the garb of fiction, it is without doubt *Disraeli loquitur* in the following characteristic encomium of his own progenitors:—"'The Jews, Coningsby, are essentially Tories. Toryism, indeed, is but copied from the mighty prototype which has fashioned Europe. And every generation they must become more powerful, and more dangerous to the society which is hostile to them. Do you think that the quiet humdrum persecution of a decorous representative of an English university can crush those who have successively baffled the Pharaohs, Nebuchadnezzar, Rome, and the feudal ages? The fact is, you cannot destroy a pure race of the Caucasian organisation. It is a physiological fact; a simple law of nature, which has baffled Egyptian and Assyrian kings, Roman emperors, and Christian inquisitors. No penal laws, no physical tortures can effect that a superior race should be absorbed in an inferior, or be destroyed by it. The mixed persecuting races disappear; the pure persecuted remains. And at this moment, in spite of centuries, of tens of centuries of degradation, the Jewish mind exercises a vast influence on the affairs of Europe. I speak not of their laws, which you still obey; of their literature, with which your minds are saturated; but of the living Hebrew intellect.'" Of course, all this had nothing directly to do with any proposal, from any quarter, for the admission of Jews to parliament. But no doubt it would be accepted by many as furnishing the strongest reasons,

in a Radical point of view, against the refusal to admit them, because 'advanced' Radicalism would not hesitate to ignore all idea of such a thing as Christian politics, even though Christianity is part and parcel of the law of the land. Mr. Disraeli himself, though a Jew by race, was yet a Christian by religion. And hence the consistency and the legitimacy of his position, whether in the Christian legislature of his country, the Christian councils of his sovereign, or the Christian ranks of her nobility.

This, however, by the way. The question of admitting Jews to parliament, which has led to the foregoing remarks, was not long afterwards decided in the affirmative, tacitly at least, and naturally, though by no means exultingly, with the concurrence, and no doubt the approval of Mr. Disraeli himself.

And now let us return to the more interesting and exciting, though not more important subject of the new and Conservative Reform Bill. The introduction of such a measure had become unavoidable, and there was at least this consolation for those who had a prejudice against it, however acquired, whether by early education or matured reflection, that if it must be done, safer and better would it be to have it accomplished by a Conservative, rather than either a Whig or Radical administration. One may be pretty sure that Mr. Disraeli himself had no particular predilection for tampering with such a question as parliamentary representation—a question involving the stability and safety, nay, the continued existence of our monarchical institutions, and so serious a warning respecting which was furnished by the perilous excitement attending the previous Reform Act, in only too many of its practical unconstitutional accompaniments and results. Although it is not Mr. Disraeli *in propria persona* that animadverts on that measure in the following remarks, yet they are from his own pen, and no doubt were his own reflections. It is in his novel of 'Sybil' that they thus so strikingly occur:—'The Reform Bill has not placed the administration of our affairs in abler hands than conducted them previously to the passing of that measure, for the most efficient members of the present cabinet, with some few

exceptions, and those attended by peculiar circumstances, were ministers before the Reform Act was contemplated. Nor has that memorable statute created parliament of a higher reputation for public qualities, such as political ability, and popular eloquence, and national consideration, than was furnished by the old scheme. On the contrary, one House of Parliament has been irremediably degraded into the decaying position of a mere court of registry, possessing great privileges, on condition that it never exercises them; while the other chamber, that at the first blush, and to the superficial, exhibits symptoms of almost unnatural vitality, engrossing in its orbit all the business of the country, assumes on more studious inspection somewhat of the character of a select vestry, fulfilling parochial rather than imperial offices, and beleaguered by critical and clamorous millions, who cannot comprehend why a privileged and exclusive senate is requisite to perform functions which immediately concern all, which most personally comprehend, and which many in their civic spheres believe they could accomplish in a manner not less satisfactory, though certainly less ostentatious.' So much for the degeneracy of the legislative character of parliament under the influences of popular, and, of course, more or less democratic reform, which it scarcely needed so searching an eye as that of a Disraeli to detect, but which it is not unimportant to have presented to us as the result of his own convictions.

Let us now, for a moment, see if any material practical benefits have in the slightest degree compensated for the degeneracy. It is the same inquiring mind of the same discerning Disraeli that asks—'But if it has not furnished us with abler administrators or a more illustrious senate, the Reform Act may have exercised on the country at large a beneficial influence. Has it? Has it elevated the tone of the public mind? Has it cultured the popular sensibilities to noble and ennobling ends? Has it proposed to the people of England a higher sense of national respect and confidence than the debasing qualification universally prevalent in this country since the fatal introduction of the system of Dutch finance? Who will pretend it? If

a spirit of rapacious covetousness, desecrating all the humanities of life, has been the besetting sin of England for the last century and a half, since the passing of the Reform Act the altar of Mammon has blazed with triple worship. To acquire, to accumulate, to plunder each other, by virtue of philosophic phrases, to propose a Utopia to consist only of wealth and toil: this has been the breathless business of enfranchised England for the last twenty or thirty years, until we are startled from our voracious strife by the wail of intolerable serfage.' The picture thus so graphically drawn of some of the more baneful and corrupting influences of democratic, and because democratic, more popular *reform* of parliament cannot be gainsayed, however it may mortify and humiliate us to admit them. We well remember the spirit of reform being impersonated during its revellings in the popular mania it created, in 1831-2, and described as reversing, wherever it prevailed in that democratic legislatism it was then accomplishing, the graceful idea which some classical poet of old had applied to a great contemporary philosopher, in the well-known words, *Nihil tetigit quod non ornavit*—'He touches nothing which he does not adorn;' while of the spirit of democratic reform, in a monarchy more particularly, it had, on the other hand, with only too much truth to be said, *Nihil tetigit quod non deformavit*—'It touches nothing which it does not deform.'

With a mind probably full of thoughts such as these, it would scarcely be in any wise a congenial duty for Mr. Disraeli to bring forward another, even though a better, *Reform* Bill. But being a duty, a public and official duty, incumbent upon him under the circumstances of the case, he had, as a minister of the crown, no alternative, while he had long felt it desirable to settle the vexed question, if possible, on a sound constitutional basis.

It was with an acknowledgment and under a full sense of this duty that Mr. Disraeli opened his celebrated speech in introducing his Reform Bill to a by no means friendly House of Commons, in 1859—a speech which has justly been regarded by an enlightened and impartial public opinion as one of the ablest and most judicious,

because the most thoroughly constitutional expositions of parliamentary reform ever delivered in either of the two legislative chambers. 'It is my duty to-night,' it began, when the hearty cheering which greeted the orator had subsided, 'to draw the attention of the House to a theme than which nothing more important can be submitted to their consideration. Those which are often esteemed the greatest political questions, those questions, for example, of peace or war which now occupy and agitate the public mind, are in fact inferior. In either of those cases an erroneous policy may be retraced; and there are no disasters which cannot be successfully encountered by the energies of a free people; but the principles on which the distribution of power depends in a community, when once adopted, can rarely be changed. All error in that direction may permanently affect the fortunes of a state or the character of a people. But grave as is the duty, and difficult as is the task, which have devolved upon her Majesty's government in undertaking to prepare a measure to amend the representation of the people in this House, these I admit, and cheerfully admit, are considerably mitigated by two circumstances—the absence at this moment of all passion on the subject, and the advantage of experience. Whatever may be the causes, on which I cannot dwell, I believe that on this subject, and on this occasion, I appeal to as impartial a tribunal as is compatible with our popular form of government. I believe there is at this time a general wish among all men of light and leading in this country, that the solution of this long-contested question should be arrived at; and that if public men, occupying the position which we now occupy feel it their duty to come forward to offer that solution, but which I trust in our case will not be based on any mean concession or any temporary compromise, but on principles consistent with the spirit of our constitution, which will bear the scrutiny of debate, and which I trust may obtain the sympathy of public opinion, I feel persuaded that in the present conjuncture of our political world such a solution will meet from this House with a candid though a discriminating support. And equally it may be observed that the

public mind of the country has for the last quarter of a century, and especially during its latter portion, been so habituated to the consideration of all questions connected with popular representation, the period itself has been so prolific of political phenomena for the contemplation and study, and, I may add, the instruction of the people of this country, that we are in a much more favourable condition than the statesmen who, in 1832, undertook the great office which then devolved upon them, because we address not only a parliament but a country which has upon this subject the advantage of previous knowledge; and all will agree that this greatly facilitates both discussion and decision. Although some of those who took a leading part in the transactions of 1832, happily for us, still sit in both Houses of Parliament, yet, so long is the space of time that has elapsed since those occurrences, I think it is not impossible to speak of them with something of the candour of history. I do not doubt that our future records will acknowledge that during some of the most important political events of modern history, those events were treated with the energy and the resource becoming British statesmen. If we judge of the act of 1832 by its consequences, in the measures of this House and the characters of its members, it must be admitted that that policy was equal to the emergency it controlled and directed. I cannot, indeed, agree with those who attribute to the legislature of 1832 every measure of public benefit that has been passed by this House during the last twenty-five years. I know well that before the reform of the House took place the administration of this country was distinguished by its ability and precision. I believe, indeed that, especially in the latter part of the administration of Lord Liverpool, this House was rather in advance of the country at large. But I think that the reform of the House of Commons in 1832 greatly added to the energy and public spirit in which we had then become somewhat deficient.' Nothing could well be more appropriate than this to the situation in which Mr. Disraeli must have found himself placed—nothing more likely to conciliate the jealousy and the animosity he well knew there prevailed among

those he addressed—nothing, in short, that could be better calculated to propitiate, if not to reconcile, a House, a majority of which, it could not be disputed, was decidedly either opposed altogether, or in a great measure, to his proceedings. Many scoffed at his presumption in attempting to deal with such a question as that of parliamentary reform, or at any rate, were strongly mistrustful of his qualifications for such a task. And this, of course, must excuse any apparent straining of praise or even approval as to the general result of the Act of 1832, which may be found in the concluding sentences of the extract we have made from Mr. Disraeli's speech.

The great excuse, however, for a Conservative minister dealing with a matter of 'reform' which opened out questions dangerously calculated to disturb the very foundations, not of our constitutional system of parliamentary representation merely, but of our monarchical institutions generally, was the inauspicious circumstance—for which Mr. Disraeli and his colleagues were certainly not responsible—of the subject having been, during the preceding six or seven years, recommended to the consideration of parliament from the Throne—at the instance, of course, of Liberal ministries, in order to gain the support of the Radical portion of the Liberal party. In 1852 this was done by Lord John Russell's (that veteran Whig reformer) administration; in 1854, under that of Lord Aberdeen, his lordship being then a renegade Tory; and in 1857, under that of Lord Palmerston, also a backslider from the Tory ranks. It is not unworthy of remark that generally when such deviations from Tory, and that is from constitutional principles in their integrity, have taken place, the political perversion has involved the committal of its victim to that very kind of parliamentary 'reform' which before, if they did not denounce, they at least disapproved and fought shy of. It cannot justly be denied that Conservatism contemplates reform where it is absolutely necessary, quite as decidedly as Liberalism does where it is really not absolutely necessary. It is, in fact, an indispensable principle of true Conservatism, which distinctly recognises the force of Andrew Marvell's well-known dictum, that 'All

governments and societies of men do, in process of time, gather an irregularity, and wear away much of their primitive institutions; and therefore the true wisdom of all ages hath been to review at fit periods these errors, defects, or excesses which have insensibly crept into the public administration, to brush the dust off the wheels and oil them again, or, if it hath been found admissible, to choose a set of new ones.' This idea was very forcibly illustrated in Mr. Disraeli's speech on the occasion referred to. He put the case contrastedly, to the following effect:—'Now it appears to me, that those who are called parliamentary reformers may be divided into two classes. The first are those whose object I will attempt to describe in a sentence. They are those who would adapt the settlement of 1832 to the England of 1859; and would act in the spirit, and according to the genius of the existing Constitution. Among *these* reformers I may be permitted to class her Majesty's present ministers. But it would not be candid, and it would be impolitic, not to acknowledge that there is another school of reformers having objects very different from those which I have named. The new school, if I may so describe them, would avowedly effect a parliamentary reform on principles different from those which have hitherto been acknowledged as forming the proper foundation for this House. The new school of reformers are of opinion that the chief, if not the sole object, of representation is to realise the opinion of a numerical majority of the country. Their standard is population; and I admit that their views have been clearly and efficiently placed before the country. Now there is no doubt *population* is, and must always be, *one* of the elements of our representative system. But there is also such a thing as *property;* and that, too, must be considered. I am ready to admit that the new school have not on any occasion limited the elements of their representative system solely to population. They have, with a murmur, admitted that property has equal claims to consideration; but then they have said that property and population go together. Well, property and population do go together—in statistics, but in nothing else. Population and

property do not go together in politics and practice. I cannot agree with the principles of the new school, either if population or property is their sole, or if both together constitute their double standard. I think the function of this House is something more than merely to represent the population and property of the country. This House, in my opinion, ought to represent all the interests of the country. Now those interests are sometimes antagonistic, often competing, always independent and jealous; yet they all demand a distinctive representation in this House; and how can that be effected, under such circumstances, by the simple representation of the voice of the majority, or even by the mere preponderance of property? If the function of this House is to represent all the interests of the country, you must, of course, have representation scattered over the country; because interests are necessarily local.' Mr. Disraeli then unfolded the details of his measure, which provided that persons having funded property to the value of ten pounds a year, pensioners with twenty pounds per annum, the occupants of a portion of a house paying a weekly rent of eight shillings, also graduates of universities, and members of the clerical, legal, and medical professions should have votes. The bill also proposed to equalise the suffrage in towns and counties by giving to counties a ten pound franchise, and depriving forty shilling freeholders in boroughs of their county vote. There were also proposals for substituting polling papers for the present method of voting, and for a redistribution of seats.

We need scarcely say more on Mr. Disraeli's memorable speech to enable the reader to form a pretty correct idea of the Reform Bill it was introducing to the House. This bill, it will be seen, was one that went carefully on the lines of the constitution, and was designed to conserve the constitution, as well as to uphold and to perpetuate the monarchy to which it belongs. But it was not acceptable to the majority of the House of Commons, as the House was then constituted. The second school of reformers Mr. Disraeli described sought to effect a reform with population as its principal standard, in order to place the democracy of the country in the ascendant.

That a bill, then, of such a character, and with such an object, as Mr. Disraeli's was declared to be, should not, we repeat, have been acceptable to the House of Commons to which it was submitted, could scarcely excite surprise, though it could not fail to produce regret. Another passage in Mr. Disraeli's perspicuous, as well as eloquent and exhaustive speech will further show the sound constitutional nature of its proposed amendments of our representative system — amendments which would have judiciously enlarged its electoral basis, whilst decidedly improving its personal qualities. 'Her Majesty's ministers,' he continued, 'have endeavoured, so far as their intelligence could guide them, to offer a proposition to the House which, consistently with their conception of the principles on which the English constitution is founded, should secure for this country a complete representation. One of our first considerations was, of course, the electoral body, of which I have treated at such length. But a complete representation does not depend merely upon the electoral body, however varied you may make its elements, however homogeneous its character. It also depends upon whether, in your system, the different interests of the country are adequately represented. Now, discarding for ever that principle of population, upon which it has been my duty to make some remarks; accepting it as a truth that the function of this House is to represent, not the views of a numerical majority—not merely the gross influence of a predominant property, but the varied interests of the country—we have felt that on this occasion it was incumbent on us diligently and even curiously to investigate the whole of England, and see whether there were interests not represented in this House, whose views we should wish to be heard here, and whether the general representation of the country could be matured and completed. In undertaking this office it must not be supposed we have been animated by a feeling that we would only do that which the hard necessity of the case required. Had we been so influenced, it is possible we might have brought forward a measure that would have served the purpose of the moment, and yet have left seeds behind us which

might have germinated in future troubles, controversies, and anxieties. We have been sincerely desirous to adapt the scheme of 1832 to the England of 1859, and to induce the House to come to a general settlement, whether as regards the exercise of the franchise, or the direct representation in this House of the various interests of the community, which would take this question for a long period out of the agitating thoughts of men. We have sought to offer to the country, in the hope that it will meet with its calm and serious approval, what we believe to be a just and—I will not say a final—but conclusive settlement. And we have laid it down as our task to consider, without any respect to persons, what we honestly think are the interests of the country that are not represented, but which we should at this moment counsel the House to add to their numbers.' Such was the impartial and constitutional character of perhaps the first Parliamentary Reform Bill ever produced, in modern times at least, by a Conservative government, and one constructed as much as possible on Conservative principles—too much so, as the sequel proved, for the Radicals; but too little so for a small number of sturdy Tories, whose not over-wise desire, under the circumstances, it was to be content to let things remain as they were.

There were many propitiatory expressions in the course of Mr. Disraeli's speech—which occupied about three hours in delivery—that one might have thought would have been irresistible with one at least, if not both, sections of his opponents; and none more so, perhaps, than the two or three in the few brief sentences with which he thus concluded:—'Having now described as clearly as I could the principal provisions of our Bill, I shall say no more. I believe that this is a measure wise, prudent, and adequate to the occasion. I earnestly hope the House may adopt it. I believe it is a Conservative measure, using the epithet in no limited or partial sense, but in the highest and holiest interpretation of which it is capable. I can say sincerely that those who framed this measure are men who reverence the past, are proud of the present, but are confident of the future. Such as it is I now submit it for the consideration of the House of Commons,

convinced that they will deal with it as becomes the representatives of a wise and understanding people,'—a conviction, however, which was, on the motion for its second reading, somewhat summarily falsified, by the singling out for condemnation a particular clause, purposely, and we cannot but think most properly introduced as a fair, though but a partial, check to what might otherwise prove to be a too copious concession to the democratic element.

Its fate was thus sealed by an amendment moved by Lord John Russell, who had all along regarded Mr. Disraeli as usurping a function that was exclusively his own—an amendment having the effect of rejecting the bill on account of the clause which, while lowering and extending the county franchise, would debar freehold electors from voting on the same qualification both in counties and boroughs. Mr. Disraeli offered to make some concession on this point, though not what satisfied the Liberal party, bent as it was on having a more democratic measure; and on a division the bill was defeated by a majority of 39—a majority that included even a few unenlightened and discontented Tories.

The immediate result of this defeat was a determination on the part of the government to appeal to the country. Parliament was thereupon dissolved, and the bustle and excitement of another general election at once ensued. Mr. Disraeli's address to his constituents, the electors of Buckinghamshire, was naturally of the character of a ministerial manifesto. It appealed for a continuance not only of their support to himself as now a tried and, he hoped, a trusted representative, but to the country at large, in strengthening the hands of the only party political, which at the present conjuncture could advantageously administer the rule and governance of the kingdom; for the Liberal party, he showed, was hopelessly split up into discordant sections, while the critical state of affairs on the Continent, as well as at home, required the Queen to have a strong administration, and the Conservative party offered the requisite materials for forming such an administration. The right hon. gentleman was re-elected for Buckinghamshire, as a matter of course; but the elections failed

to give him and his colleagues a majority, or even to improve at all their position in parliament, the returns giving but 302 Conservatives to 350 Liberals. The Liberal opposition, on the assembling of the new parliament, conscious of its strength, showed rather an indecent haste to take advantage of the ministerial defeat at the polls; for scarcely had the House of Commons been duly constituted, so as to allow of any motion being entertained, than Lord Hartington, on behalf of the Liberal party, proposed a vote of no confidence in the government, which being carried by a decided majority, ministers instantly resigned. It was hardly a fair party proceeding, because the ministry had done nothing whatever to forfeit the confidence of the new House of Commons, the majority of which had not the patience to wait and ascertain what they were prepared to do. The value of such a vote, too, was as insignificant, as the way in which it was passed was unusual; for it was only carried by the proposer of the vote and his Whig partizans making common cause with that Radical and revolutionary section of 'Advanced' Liberals, to whose Radical views they could not but be much more strongly opposed than they were to the constitutional views of the Conservatives.

The discredit to the Whig portion of the Liberal party of such a coalition, for such a purpose, was soon exhibited under circumstances which aggravated its objectionable character. The new Liberal ministry was one which, as before, had Lord Palmerston for Premier; and no sooner did he begin to resume Whig policy when the Radical section, whose votes he had contrived to enlist in order to restore him to office, became his systematic opponents, he having at once found it unavoidable, if he were to retain his official position, to kick away the ladder by which he had so cleverly climbed back to it. Mr. Disraeli, and the high-minded party that he led, made no attempt to displace Lord Palmerston from that position, notwithstanding he had been restored to it by such means, but left him to struggle on against those but for whose help he could never have recovered it. This state of things—so undignified, not to say

Lord Mulgrave.

so anomalous, in the government of a great country like ours—continued for three or four years; and even a Liberal writer on the subject has been constrained to say of it,—'In that period the House of Commons presented the curious spectacle of a Premier who frequently found on the opposite side support against the more extreme and discontented elements of his own party; in fact, it was a period when anything like acrimonious party conflict or bitterness was suspended,'[1]—and this out of sheer pity for the Liberal Premier, to whom they yet had stood in opposition, mingled ever and anon with a feeling of Conservative apprehension and alarm lest the lately Radical coalitionists of the Liberal government should prevail in inveigling the House into voting for their policy.

We must reserve for another chapter the events which immediately succeeded another change of ministry, throughout the long period of its existence—events that only served to herald the resumption of office once more by Mr. Disraeli. But there are two or three by no means uninteresting incidents belonging to his late occupation of office which ought not to be passed over in silence, though more exciting topics have so far hindered us from noticing them.

In a debate, which was an angry one in many of its contentions and invectives, a rencounter occurred between Mr. Disraeli and Sir James Graham, which disclosed some rather artful party tactics on the part of the latter, together with some unexpected admissions from him as to his opinion of the former. Sir James, when excited by party feeling in political controversy, was apt like others to indulge in speculative accusations; and on this occasion he had, in the heat of the contention that arose on the hustings at Carlisle, had recourse to some unnecessarily harsh, and unjustifiably reproachful language as to the way in which the Conservatives were obtaining votes in the elections, which now called forth from Mr. Disraeli the following amusing, though by no means, it appeared, harmless retort:—'When I read in the newspapers the line "City of Carlisle" among the election intelligence, I naturally looked at what was taking

[1] Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P.

place in that quarter. But reading I now fear a little incorrectly, I confess I did mistake, at the time, the speech which appeared to have been made by a distinguished member of this House'—meaning Sir James himself—'for that of the young gentleman he was introducing to his constituents,' who has since become famous as Sir Wilfrid Lawson, the nephew of Sir James. 'When I read that charge against the ministry which we were told was to be the basis of a parliamentary vote of want of confidence, when I read statements made without the slightest foundation, and with a bitterness which seemed to me to be perfectly gratuitous, I could not help saying, "Young men will be young men." Youth is, as we all know, somewhat reckless in assertion, and when we are juvenile and curly one takes pride in sarcasm and invective. I felt—and I am sure my colleagues shared the sentiment—that when that young gentleman entered this House he might, when gazing upon the venerable form, and listening to the accents of benignant wisdom that fell from the lips of the right hon. gentleman the member for Carlisle, he might learn how reckless assertions in time may mature into accuracy of statement, and how bitterness of invective, however organic, can be controlled by the vicissitudes of a wise experience. . . . The public have really believed that a corrupt administration has been obtaining returns from the hustings by the vilest means and for the most infamous purposes. They have believed that the allowance to innkeepers for the billeting of soldiers was increased at the wish of the War Minister, in order to bribe the publicans to vote for government candidates; more than that, the public really did believe that my Lord Derby had subscribed £20,000 to a fund to manage the elections. The Earl of Derby has treated that assertion with contempt. All the other assertions made at the time have been answered in detail, and therefore I suppose he thought the time might come when the subject being fairly before the House he could leave it to me to say for him what I do say now, that that statement was an impudent fabrication; and,' he added, 'it is not agreeable to listen to such statements made by men who have filled the highest

offices in the state.' They who remember Sir James Graham, and who had any acquaintance with his eccentric and often excitable, and always sensitive political character—and the writer of this had, at perhaps the most interesting, because the most eventful and exciting period of the right hon. baronet's public life, peculiar personal opportunities not only of becoming familiar with his political conduct, but occasionally participating in its passing penalties—will see at a glance how keenly he must have felt the ingenious irony of his accusing and railing speech at the Carlisle election being taken for that of his youthful nephew, Sir Wilfrid. The introduction of Lord Derby's name, too, as one whom Sir James had apparently unjustifiably reflected upon, must have mortified him in no slight degree, remembering, as no doubt he did, that once they were in debate most confidential, and thoroughly fraternal in alliance, first as converts to, then as champions of, the Conservative cause; both of which important, and as many thought, patriotic engagements the once not unworthily renowned Baronet of Netherby forsook and repudiated. But Sir James, notwithstanding, was not behind his assailant in the pungency of his retort, though without the consciousness of being on the right side which gave such force and confidence to his ministerial castigator. Mr. Disraeli's phrase 'impudent fabrication' had evidently discomposed him most of all; though this was eventually made comparatively harmless by the explanation that it was not meant to apply to Sir James himself, but to the mendacious author of the statement which the right hon. baronet had quoted. At length all at once Sir James became most amiable, assuring Mr. Disraeli that 'having had the honour of a seat in that House when the right hon. gentleman first took his place there, he early, indeed immediately, recognised his great abilities, and without envy, without the slightest grudging, had watched and admired his rise to his present eminence.' And so the incident amicably terminated.

We have now briefly to revert to quite another, quite a different, and a much more agreeable circumstance, illustrative of the ministerial career of Mr. Disraeli, and one that occurred in the parliament of

which we are now taking our final leave. It is the circumstance of his having conferred a benefit of the greatest value upon the metropolis, and one that well deserves to be commemorated by some permanent monumental record of the obligation the inhabitants of all ranks and conditions owe to him for it. We allude to the measures for purifying the river Thames, and which have now undergone the test of some years' experience of their thorough success, and their invaluable efficacy.

It was by no accidental opportunity that Mr. Disraeli's attention was given to the important subject of the impurity of the Thames, and its great offensiveness, not to say its danger, to the myriads of all classes living within its deleterious influences. The question, it is true, became ripe for effectual legislation during one of his terms of office, and he eagerly took advantage of the opportunity to have the project submitted to the government carried into effect with that promptitude and that ingenious skill which so reasonably and so thoroughly accomplished the great object in view. But he had long before taken a deep interest in such sanitary questions; and his memorable allusions to the subject on a public occasion at Aylesbury, in 1864, confirmed his interest in the work he had done with regard to 'Old Father Thames,' when he so happily remarked: 'A very great scholar observes that in his opinion the declaration of the wisest of mankind, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity," was not a misprint, but a mistake of the copyist, and that he believed the words were, not *Vanitas vanitatum, omnia vanitas,* but *Sanitas sanitatum, omnia sanitas.*'" 'Now I quite agree,' he added, 'that it must have been a misquotation of the words of the wise King of Israel, and if so, that they would have constituted one of his best claims to be considered one of the wisest of mankind.'

Mr. Disraeli always took a warm and appreciative interest in rivers, their beauty, their majesty, their utility, and, with him more than all, their classical and historical associations. He has finely apostrophised and commemorated many of the more celebrated rivers in Europe, in his 'Vivian Grey,' which shows how early in life he

had a deep sense of their natural and acquired attractions; and although the Thames was not among them, he yet lived to estimate and to admire it as one of our greatest material and enduring objects of national interest and importance. 'Thou rapid Aar!' his hero, impersonating himself, is made to exclaim, 'thy waves are swollen by the snows of a thousand hills; but for whom are thy leaping waters fed? The Rhine?' 'Calmly, O placid Necker! does thy blue stream glide through thy vine-clad vales; but calmer seems thy course when it touches the rushing Rhine!' 'How fragrant are thy banks, which, cooled by thy dark green waters, thou tranquil Maine! but is not the perfume sweeter of the gardens of the Rhine!' 'Red Moselle! fierce is the swell of thy spreading course; but why do thy broad waters blush when they meet the Rhine?' And then of the beauteous and majestic stream to which all these, and so many others of equal note, are but tributaries, see how glowingly and how appreciatingly he expatiates,—'And thou, triumphant and imperial river, flushed with the tribute of these vassal streams! thou art thyself a tributary, and hastenest in the pride of conquest to confess thine own vassalage. For no superior stream exults in the homage of thy servile waters: the Ocean, the eternal Ocean, alone comes forward to receive thy kiss! Not as a conqueror, but as a parent, he welcomes with proud joy his gifted child, the offspring of his honour; thy duty his delight; thy tribute thine own glory!' All this is doubtless very clever—very poetical, and very pleasing. It is, in such respect, more too, far more, than can be said of 'Old Father Thames!' And yet can *he* afford to look down even on the far-famed 'imperial river' with a certain degree, if not of contempt for his renown, yet of pride for his own rich resources, and practical usefulness, combined, too, with so much of what the other can also boast, in the beauties of sylvan scenery, of English poetry, and historical romance. Where

> 'The castled crag of Drachenfels
> Frowns o'er the wide and winding Rhine'

there is undoubtedly a concentration of flowing beauty and picturesque grandeur scarcely, perhaps, to be exceeded, if ever equalled, of its

kind and character, in Europe. Yet what has it, or any other part of the Rhine, that can excel in river scenery, and sylvan surroundings, the view up the Thames from Richmond Hill? Or where is there a river-side spot, so beauteous, so enchanting, of which it can with greater truth, or deeper interest, be said, as is so delightfully said, in the celebrated ode of its own poet, Collins—

> 'Remembrance oft shall haunt the shore
> When Thames in summer-wreaths is drest.'

It was in aspects very different from any of these, however, and with objects, if not so pleasant, yet infinitely higher and more important, that Mr. Disraeli, in the case referred to, gave his attention, and devoted his energies, to the Thames. The river may be said to flow through the centre of our great metropolis, and its state was one which was at times intolerably offensive by its foulness, and its exhalations poisonous by their malaria. Mr. Disraeli prepared and passed a legislative measure which has effectually removed these insufferable evils; and for this alone, we repeat, were there nothing else, he would well and specially deserve a public monument, as a lasting testimony of public gratitude.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE PALMERSTONIAN POLICY.

'It becomes one while exempt from woes to look to the dangers.'—*Sophocles.*

THE second administration of Lord Palmerston, displacing that of the Earl of Derby, in which Mr. Disraeli was Chancellor of the Exchequer (June 1859), did not afford the latter so much opportunity of active participation in the business of the House of Commons as he had hitherto been called upon to exercise. The leadership of the House had necessarily to be transferred to other hands; and Mr. Gladstone, as the successor of Mr. Disraeli in high office, almost as a matter of course, succeeded him in his parliamentary position also—Mr. Disraeli, however, undertaking the leadership of the Conservative opposition. The strength of the ministerial party was formidable; but that of the opposition was by no means enervated, while its valiant leader remained as vigilant and as energetic as ever. But there was an idea prevailed, and not only independent Liberals, but moderate, or rather, perhaps, timid half-hearted Conservatives—probably for the sake of peace and quietness—yielded to it, that in the present political circumstances of the country, and the peculiar and perplexing position of parties, no one but Lord Palmerston could secure and sustain a steady ministerial majority of the House of Commons. And no doubt there was a good deal of reason in that idea, only it involved a decided neglect of domestic political interests, by putting off as much as possible the operation of any distinctive domestic policy, and directing the attention of parliament and the country almost altogether to foreign matters, many of which though popular in certain quarters, and some of them especially flattering to Liberalism, were yet highly perilous to the peace of Europe, and particularly to the maintenance

of peace in several of our foreign relations. But it was a scheme of administration peculiarly and popularly Palmerstonian—and the noble lord's name had become a household word, not only pretty generally of favour, but often of affection, in a large proportion of the public mind of England—and one which seemed to have a sort of magic influence on public opinion, and even on party spirit. Such was the anomalous position of the British ministry, against which Mr. Disraeli had now to wage an apparently fruitless warfare in the House of Commons. But few public men, if any, of either party could have patiently and resignedly borne what he did, in disappointment, in mortification, in a continuous course of defeat, and one would have thought, a constantly recurring endurance of vexation and depression.

A severely critical biographer of Mr. Disraeli,[1] whom we have more than once had occasion to allude to in these pages, has thus described the situation of the Conservative leader at the period in question: 'During these years Mr. Disraeli was fighting a hopeless battle; but he still kept on preaching that policy of peace, non-intervention, and economy, of which I have recently spoken. He preached, however, to a world that did not listen, and his teaching, instead of lowering, seemed but to increase the *prestige* and power of his rival (Lord Palmerston). Those years of vain effort were not, it will be seen, lost upon him. He did not perceive in vain that the apostle of peace abroad, and of domestic improvement at home, was impotent against one who practised the opposite creed of vigorous assertion of English *prestige* and active English intervention: he saw, learned, and digested the lesson that the popular minister in England—for a time at least—is he who appeals to belligerent emotions, national vanity, and hereditary prejudice, against one foreign power in particular,' meaning, of course, Russia.

Now, there are several particles of somewhat striking truths in this statement; although it sets out with an assertion that can only be received in a party sense—the assertion, namely, that Mr. Disraeli 'preached to a world that did not listen.' For, in the first place,

[1] Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P.

Liberalism and Radicalism combined do not constitute the world of England; although Liberals and Radicals *did* listen habitually, and often, as we all know, gnashed their teeth when they heard the stinging exposures of their servile submission to one whom Mr. Disraeli had long before, as we have already had occasion to show, thus facetiously, though rather forcibly, described him: 'He is the Tory chief of a Radical cabinet. With no domestic policy, he is obliged to divert the attention of the people from the consideration of their own affairs to the distraction of foreign politics. His external system is turbulently aggressive, that his rule at home may be tranquil and unassailed. Hence arise excessive expenditure, heavy taxation, and the stoppage of all social improvement.' This was being remarkably verified during Mr. Disraeli's 'years of vain effort.' Mr. Disraeli's clever critic aforesaid did well, therefore, parenthetically to interpose the significant remark, that it was only 'for a time at least,' that Lord Palmerston could thus successfully appeal to the people of England, and get the Liberal party to aid and abet him in his proceedings.

In the next place—although, for the time belated, the world of Liberalism and Radicalism would not give heed to Mr. Disraeli's words of truth and soberness—there was a world of far higher political significance and patriotic perception that did, and that, doing so, gave him the best support then in their power; though their representatives in parliament, through their being in a minority all the while, rendered that support, for the time being, practically unavailing. Still it was not regarded by Mr. Disraeli himself as a 'hopeless battle' that he was fighting. One quality alone was required to prevent its being hopeless, and that quality he possessed in an eminent degree, and failed not to exercise it patiently until victory became the result and the reward—the quality of perseverance; and although it was what would at once have disheartened and discomfited most men—

'A perseverance with a battered shield,'

he yet patiently persisted in persevering,—remembering, not im-

probably, the divine assurance that, not being 'weary in well-doing, in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.'

And he, assuredly, was never 'weary in well-doing,'—in doing, that is, what he believed to be his duty. He could never have attained the eminence he did—he would never have been twice Prime Minister of England, or have won the coronet of England's proud nobility—if he had not, at that critical conjuncture, persevered,—aye, persevered in preaching apparently, though only apparently, 'to a world that did not listen,' or rather pretended not to; but which yet, eventually, became influenced by what he preached, until at length he conquered that world's political hostility and party prejudice, and was called by his approving and applauding sovereign to what has ever been regarded as the highest public honour a British subject can attain—that of holding and guiding the helm of the state.

Much, we repeat, had Mr. Disraeli to endure in passing through those dreary years of defeat and discomfiture—often accompanied, too, more or less, if not by insult, yet by invective that was frequently near akin to it, and by misrepresentation and angry abuse; no slight aggravations, it must be admitted, of the inevitable mortification, if not always the keen disappointment, of a tyrant majority's temporary triumphs over him. Still, we say, he was not to be overcome—still he persevered, in spite of all rebuffs; disregarding all

'The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,'

which he doubtless felt ''twas nobler in the mind to suffer,' rather than succumb to a daring and powerful adversary; remembering, not improbably, the wise saying of an ancient eastern oracle, that 'He will never enjoy the sweets of the spring, nor will he obtain the honeycomb of Mount Hybla, if he dreads his face being stung, or is annoyed by briers; for the rose is guarded by its thorn, and honey is defended by the bee.'

Mr. Disraeli had, in the debate on the address, when Lord Palmerston's ministry met parliament, uttered a powerful and censurable

condemnation of Lord Palmerston's rash and officious intermeddling with foreign contentions and agitations, threatening, as they did, to embroil us in hostilities which might have most injuriously affected our foreign relations. 'I do not know,' he said, 'any member of this House—either among my colleagues, or among those who sit on the other side of the House—who has ever maintained the monstrous proposition that England ought never, under any circumstances, to interfere in the affairs of foreign states. There are conditions under which it may be our imperative duty to interfere. We may clearly interfere in the affairs of foreign countries when the interests or the honour of England are at stake, or when, in our opinion, the independence of Europe is menaced. But a great responsibility devolves upon that minister who has to decide when these conditions have arisen. The general principle that we ought not to interfere in the affairs of foreign nations unless there is a clear necessity, and that, generally speaking, it ought to be held a political dogma that the people of other countries should settle their own affairs, without the introduction of foreign influence or foreign power, is one which, I think, the House does not only accept, but will strictly adhere to.'

Such creditable utterances as these on the part of an ex-minister, together with the circumstance of his being in a position consistently, and with authority to make them, constituted a justification of much of his conduct and his character that had aforetime exposed him to misrepresentation. His telling speeches evidently made a deep impression in his favour, both in parliament and in the country. On one subject Mr. Disraeli was particularly earnest and emphatic—that of the Palmerston ministry being reported as having already begun to enter into an agreement with the French government for territorial and imperial aggrandisement in the new and aspiring kingdom of Italy. Proposals had been recently made for a congress at which representatives of the neutral powers should attend, and Mr. Disraeli, disliking the idea, protested against England taking any part in the deliberations, on the ground that the country was in favour of strict

non-intervention. It had been said that the Emperor of the French had not realised his expectations, but he was disposed to give the Emperor credit for peaceful motives. At any rate, it was clearly England's duty not to meddle, and he urged Lord Palmerston to bear this constantly in mind: 'Instead of going to congresses and conferences for petty objects in which England has no interest, and which may involve us in great disaster, let the noble lord prove to the world that England is a power that possesses and exercises a great influence, especially with France, by accomplishing that which is much more important than formal articles of peace, by bringing about that which will prove to the great countries of Europe that peace is the policy of their rulers.' Mr. Disraeli was very emphatic on these points, and several times reiterated the warnings and entreaties which he had felt it his duty to utter; at the same time complaining, not without cause, of the reticence of ministers on foreign questions, respecting which it was their duty to communicate to both Houses the fullest intelligence promptly and regularly; more especially when, as in the present case, such enormous responsibilities were involved.

And here it may not inopportunely be remarked how inconsistent, not to say how very unfair, it has since been, on the part of the Liberal ministers that have succeeded Mr. Disraeli's administration, to be continually taunting that administration with mysterious and suspicious *secrecy* as to its foreign policy and proceedings, while they themselves, as did their party at the time referred to, were systematically giving such just cause of complaint as to their own official acts and intentions touching interferences in foreign disputes and agitations, and creating an uneasiness thereby in the public mind that was often injurious to the commercial interests of the country, as well as being the cause of anxiety, and often of alarm, as to the preservation of the peace of Europe, and the tranquillity, if not also the safety of our own kingdom.

Not that Mr. Disraeli was in favour either of laying down a 'hard and fast' line of prohibition against intervention, or of disclosing

prematurely and indiscriminately, and as a matter of course, to parliament—and through parliament to all the world—every new phase of the government foreign policy and purposes: the very success of which must so often depend on the secrecy with which its preparations and proceedings are undertaken. Mr. Disraeli had, years before, declared his opinions and his views on the subject, and we are not aware that he ever purposely or deliberately, either in office or in opposition, acted otherwise than they prescribed. In a speech, for instance, on the address in answer to the Queen's speech, in 1849, he said,—'I am far from wishing to enforce a pedantic adherence to that positive policy which, in the barbarous dialect of the day, is called "non-intervention." On the contrary, I am persuaded that, in the settlement of the great affairs of Europe, the presence of England is often the best guarantee of peace. But it should be the presence of England with the law of nations and with the stipulations of treaties.' He had, on this account, however, a dread of diplomatists. As he has, humorously though not less truly said, through the mouth of one of the cleverest of his characters in fiction—'I always look upon diplomatists as the Hebrews of politics,' so he evidently had reason, occasionally at least, to think; and never more so, perhaps, than when, as now, he had so carefully to watch, and so closely to criticise, Lord Palmerston as a diplomatist.

When parliament reassembled in January, 1860, it was announced that a commercial treaty with France was being settled, and before the details reached the country, or, at all events, before they had been approved by parliament, the treaty was signed. The occasion enabled Mr. Disraeli, while expressing his surprise that the ministry should be so timid of submitting their doings to the notice of the House, to make some needful comments on treaties in general. Too often they have been rather bargains than treaties; and we are afraid the so-called treaty in question, as has been the case with others that the Liberals have contracted with France, came too much under that reproach. At any rate, Mr. Disraeli contended, it was not a treaty constitutionally considered, approved, and ratified. In the form in

which it was presented to the House, he maintained, certain points were offered for discussion which had already been virtually settled, if not practically carried into effect; so that the proposed discussion of it was little better than a mockery, and was calculated to bring parliament into discredit. No public question—certainly no international question—for the mutual obligation it involved, could well be graver or more critical; while, as respects the privilege it concerned and affected, of the crown and the House of Commons respectively, scarcely any could be more delicate; and all this, apart from the great interests of the country which such questions must necessarily touch. Mr. Disraeli's illustration on this occasion of the ministerial proceeding in the case, as regards the relations of the crown and the parliament, was not only forcible, but startling. 'These relations,' he said, 'are of a very peculiar and delicate character, and it should be our first study not to let them generate into mere formality. And for the crown to send down a message to this House, announcing that she had concluded a treaty with the Emperor of the French, and inviting our consideration of it, and calling on us to grant her Majesty the means to carry it into effect, when her Majesty must have been duly informed by her ministers that she had parted with all those privileges of parliament which secured our constitutional control over treaties, would be a course which I think no minister would be justified in advising his sovereign to follow.' Referring to precedent, he pointed out that Pitt, when he negotiated a treaty with France in 1786, put the country forthwith in possession of the details, and gave the House a constitutional opportunity of considering the subject. Why, he asked, could not the same course have been pursued in this instance, seeing that while the crown could negotiate treaties, the revision and execution of them rested with the people.

We mention these speeches, not only as bearing closely upon an official proceeding in which, though in opposition, Mr. Disraeli had taken a deliberative, if not an executive part, at the period of his parliamentary career at which we have, in due course, arrived, but also in order to show how valuable to the ministry, how useful to

the House, and how instructive to the country, must the counsel and the caution contained in his observations, have on all hands been felt, though not on all hands acknowledged to be.

In the recess of parliament, after the change of ministry, an imposing Conservative demonstration took place at Liverpool, presenting a striking testimony from a body of high-minded, intelligent, and cultured gentlemen, the *élite* of one of the most important maritime and commercial cities in the world, to the value of the administration which a factious Liberalism had so calamitously displaced. It consisted of a splendid banquet to their much respected neighbour, Lord Derby, and his late cabinet, at which upwards of 400 were present, the tickets being two guineas each, as well they deserved to be, considering the magnificence of the entertainment. The after-dinner speeches excited great enthusiasm, and none more rapturously than that of Mr. Disraeli, whose reception on the occasion out of doors, as well as at the festive board, showed sensationally and significantly the high estimation in which he was held in that great, wealthy, and influential community.

The Queen's speech at the opening of parliament in 1860 contained the promise of a Reform Bill, and Lord John Russell accordingly introduced one in March. The measure was a failure, and the ministry gladly availed themselves of the excuse which the approaching census afforded for postponing the subject. When parliament again met in 1861, no mention whatever was made of the *questio vexata* of parliamentary reform, for such it had become, more especially to the Premier. Vexatious indeed must it have been not only in the cabinet, but throughout the ranks of the ministry, with a majority of members of that ministry pledged to it to their constituents, and to their party. But Lord Palmerston, it appeared, had himself an instinctive aversion to it; and there is no doubt, we believe, that his close, his almost exclusive attention to foreign politics, and his anxious endeavour to keep parliament so constantly busy with that one engrossing subject, in every phase of it that could be contrived, helped to furnish an excuse for postponing reform: *postponing* was

the allegation; and if to the Greek kalends, it of course had the Premier's heartiest concurrence. Mr. Disraeli had, so long before as his 'Runnymede Letters,' styled the noble lord 'the Sporus of politics, cajoling France with an airy compliment, and Russia with perfumed cane,' but now this wonderful Sporus was doing far more than that—he was cajoling the 'great Liberal party' of his own country, not with sprightly compliments and frequent canes, but with a policy so unique, so peculiarly his own, that those who really had the sagacity, political or philosophical, to see through it—as one would suppose there were some who did—were yet content to have it so, if only their party could be kept in together, so that their leaders might be kept in office.

Lord Palmerston's policy, however, had one necessity, the providing for which, whatever its other requirements might do, constituted a somewhat hazardous experiment on the endurance of even the triumphant Liberals. They could be reconciled to the putting off of reform, even *sine die*, but it was quite another affair when that policy threatened to touch their pockets, as they saw only too clearly that it did, when the exigency arose of increasing what were already being stigmatised as the 'bloated armaments' of the country. But here again Mr. Disraeli was at his post, to watch and to warn against such an emergency. He exposed and protested against what he described as the 'secret diplomacy' of Lord Palmerston, as that which was threatening so much foreign animosity against England in certain continental quarters, as even to have created the alarm of a contemplated invasion. And hence the current idea, nay the actual intention, of an immediate and vast increase of the country's naval and military forces.

No one, either in or out of parliament, was more on the alert in this matter than Mr. Disraeli. The ministerial plea of 'self-defence' found no favour in his eyes, for, as he showed, there was no ground for it whatever, if only Lord Palmerston would let the irritating affairs of foreign countries alone. He utterly repudiated the pretence that England required a larger force than was then available for her

defence, unless the foreign policy of the Liberal government should provoke hostilities against her,—in which case, he contended, let but the cause be removed, and the effect will cease; while, as to another plea set up, that England required increased armaments in order to obtain additional territory, he scouted it with mingled scorn and derision—emphatically declaring, 'I am now quite at a loss to fix upon anything else of material importance which the country can possibly aspire to. It appears to me that England is in possession of everything which a free, proud, and rational community can desire,' and her policy, therefore, as he added in a subsequent speech, 'should be one calculated to promote the tranquillity and prosperity of the world.' But ministers had, while speaking of the desirability of vastly increasing the national armaments, been hinting at the necessity of increasing and strengthening what they plausibly called the 'moral power of England.' 'And what, forsooth,' he asked, 'is this moral power'—meaning no doubt the moral power of the Liberals—'of England which is now to be the policy of England? I will tell you what *their* "moral power" means. It means garrisons doubled and trebled. It means squadrons turned into fleets. And, in an age of mechanical invention to which there is no assignable limit, it means perpetual stimulus given to the study of the science of destruction. The consequence,' he continued, 'of this policy of what is called *moral power*,—that is to say, of warlike armaments in time of peace,—of a dictatorial policy, never conceding, scorning conciliation, shrinking from compromises, and never adopting forbearance; its consequence is, that eventually you find yourselves involved in war.' And on another occasion he spoke strongly of the so-called 'moral influence' which the government had exerted as 'a course of dangerous diplomacy which had introduced all the elements of anarchy.' For England was clearly assuming the position of a warlike nation, whereas her attitude he contended ought always to be essentially that of a moderating and mediatorial power.

Such were Mr. Disraeli's reflections, and such his animadversions on the belligerent tendency of Lord Palmerston's policy in general.

But it had especially a threatening drift and influence at that time, he showed, as respects France; while England, on her part, he maintained, had nothing to fear from France, if only her government would refrain from quarrelling with her. For, he said, 'the military restlessness of France is more than satiated. And now France requires repose and economy; France requires commerce. Peace, economy, and commerce constitute the natural and normal policy of England; and I say this is an opportunity for the noble lord possessing the confidence of this house, and armed with the resources of the country, to appeal to one who still in official *parlance* is our ally, who might, under the noble lord's influence, still become our friend;—it is, I say, in the noble lord's power to come to some really cordial understanding, sensible as well as cordial, between this country and France, and to put an end to those "bloated armaments" which only involve states in financial embarrassment.' These were wise counsels; and, while they were not, apparently, received altogether with disfavour by the government, their influence, not only in that quarter but throughout the country, could scarcely fail to be beneficial to the interests of peace and the welfare of the kingdom.

On many occasions, not in words only, but in deeds also, did Mr. Disraeli show that he was, indisputably, a man of peace and a statesman of peace. He ever counselled peace, where peace could be honourably and permanently promoted and established. And in private and social, as well as public and political life, his character was peaceful and his disposition amicable. We have heard it said by those who knew him best, and were most intimate with him in private life, that his character and disposition might justify applying to him, in sincerity and truth, the words which Shakespeare's Glo'ster only uses with dissimulation and deceit:—

> 'Tis death for me to be at enmity:
> I hate it, and desire all good men's love.'

Nor was this kindly and genial disposition, we say, confined to social life, though naturally it might be most conspicuous there. In political life he was generally most just in personal matters, and

often most generous. But amid the strifes and contentions of party warfare, the warmth and excitement of parliamentary debate, he could scarcely avoid being occasionally betrayed into angry invective and bitter retaliation—more particularly when unscrupulously assailed, as he so frequently was, with misrepresentation and calumny, and other missiles of personal hostility, which are bad for human nature to bear. But that he 'bore no malice or hatred in his heart' there were constantly-occurring incidents to prove, as well as to show how eagerly he availed himself of any opportunity of speaking well of a political opponent whom, in the heat of an indignant refutation, or the rejection of an unworthy inference, he had been impelled with severity to chastise, not only in his own defence, but in that of his party. Besides, as the leader of a party, and sometimes the representative of a ministry, in the House of Commons, both of which, during his eventful career, were continually being abused and maligned as never, perhaps, a Conservative leader, or Conservative party or ministry, had ever been before, he could not but feel in duty bound to resent the combined Whig and Radical attacks—not only to reply to, but to castigate them as they deserved; and this, not unfrequently, under provocation of the most trying kind. It has been said, we are aware, that he was too severe upon Sir Robert Peel, after that right hon. baronet's defection from the party which he had undertaken to lead, and which was, if not the cause of its break-up, yet of its complete disorganisation for a season. But surely there was enough in the circumstances of such a defection to try the temper of any one on whom it devolved to come to the front in publicly exhibiting that merited resentment. Yet see how differently he could speak of Sir Robert Peel when it all had passed away:—'Sir Robert Peel had, perhaps, the most available talent that has ever been brought to bear in the House of Commons. In exposition and in reply he was equally eminent. His statements were perspicuous, complete, and dignified. And though, notwithstanding his great sway in debate, if one may not recognise him as our greatest orator, yet he certainly was, and posterity will always recognise him

to have been, the greatest member of parliament that ever lived. Peace to his ashes! His name will be often appealed to in that scene which he loved so well, and never without the homage of his opponents.'[1]

Equally generous was he in his allusions to another great, and sometimes bitter opponent—Lord Palmerston, when addressing the House of Commons on its reassembling after the death of that noble lord. 'I do not think,' he observed, 'it is possible for us to re-assemble under this roof—many of us who have sat in all the parliaments of the Queen, and some of us who have been members of the House during three reigns—and not feel emotion, when they remark that the familiar form which has been referred to can no longer be observed among us—a form connected so intimately with the history of this country, and with the most important transactions of this House of Parliament. It is impossible to deny that the disappearance of such a character from the scene—of so much sagacity, of so much experience, and, I may say, of so much fame—must in some degree, and for some time, derogate from the authority even of the House of Commons. But it is not on this occasion that I wish to refer to the character of a great statesman, but rather to the happy disposition of the man, which lent indeed a charm to the labours and anxieties of public life. By his good temper and good sense he facilitated the course of public business beyond what it is easy to ascertain, or even, perhaps, to imagine. I am sure it must be the general sentiment among us, that the influence over our debates will not now cease of his genial experience, and his moderating wisdom. But notwithstanding this loss, I will express my hope that the present parliament, in intelligence and public spirit, will not be inferior to the preceding parliaments of this happy reign.'

Another instance of a similar kind was the following apostrophe to Lord J. Russell, who was also his opponent:—'Lord J. Russell has that degree of imagination which, though evinced rather in sentiment than expression, still enables him to generalise from the details of

[1] 'Life of Lord George Bentinck.'

his reading and experience, and to take those comprehensive views which, however easily appreciated by ordinary men, in an age of routine, are indispensable to a statesman in the conjuncture in which we live. He understands, therefore, his position, and he has the moral intrepidity which prompts ever to dare that which his intellect assures him is politic. He is consequently at the same time sagacious and bold in council.' That was said in 'Coningsby' many years before Lord Russell's death, but in his 'Life of Lord George Bentinck,' after a longer and more intimate knowledge of Lord John, Mr. Disraeli further remarks, 'Lord John Russell was a man of letters, and it is a common opinion that a man cannot be successful both in meditation and action. But in life it is best to judge men individually and not to decide upon them by general rules.'

Still another and not less remarkable instance, was in a brief but emphatic eulogy on one who, though perhaps a more careful, was not a more lenient opponent of Mr. Disraeli as a politician—we mean Mr. Cobden, of whom he thus spake in the House of Commons, April, 6, 1865:—'Having been a member of this House when Mr. Cobden first took his seat in it, and having remained in it during the whole of the somewhat lengthened period during which he continued to hold a seat in it, I cannot reconcile it to myself to be silent on this occasion, when we have to deplore the loss of one so eminent, and one too in the ripeness of his manhood and the full vigour of his intellect. Though it was the fortune of Mr. Cobden to enter life when passions ran high, still when the strife was over there was soon observed in him a moderation and tempered thought that indicated a large intellectual mind, and the possession of great statesmanlike qualities; indeed there was in his character a peculiar vein of reverence for tradition which often—unconsciously to himself—subdued and softened the acidity of the crude conclusions at which he may have arrived. That was a quality which in some degree must be possessed by ony one who attempts, or aspires, to sway the country. Notwithstanding the rapid changes amid which we live, and the numerous improvements and attractions we anticipate, this country is still Old

England, and the past is an element of our power. . . . There are members of parliament who, although they may not be present, are still members of the House—are independent of dissolutions, of the caprices of constituencies, and even of the course of time. I think that Mr. Cobden was one of those men, and I believe that when the verdict of posterity shall be recorded on his life and conduct, it will be said of him that he was without doubt the greatest political character that the upper middle class of this country have as yet produced.'

Now these were certainly magnanimous thoughts and generous sentiments to be expressed of opponents, who had often, it must be confessed, vigorously assailed him, who with so much greatness of mind, and such commendable candour, here gave utterance to them. They are but samples of a long list of instances of the same character that might be adduced, though quite sufficient to justify our attributing to Mr. Disraeli a mind essentially peaceful and generous in all its tendencies, and one that could rise superior to the acrimonies and personal disparagements of party prejudice and political animosity. Only too many of our public men might not unfrequently follow the example thus left on honourable record, with the highest advantage alike to themselves and to their country.

We must here introduce a notice of a public appearance which Lord Beaconsfield made in the north of England, when, as Mr. Disraeli, he was present at the unveiling of the Londonderry monument in the Durham market-place, on the 2nd of December, 1861. Although a call was made for him, he did not deliver any address at the inaugural ceremony, but he spoke at the luncheon which followed, responding to the toast of the House of Commons, which was proposed by Mr. J. Bramwell, Recorder. Mr. Disraeli, who was greeted with loud and prolonged applause, expressed his regret that the House of Commons had that day been associated with the name of one who was indeed a stranger among them. Although, however, he was unfortunately a stranger to the people of Durham, he was not a stranger to that eminent man whose virtues and whose public

services they had commemorated in so interesting and signal a manner. The speaker then passed a high eulogium on the late Marquis of Londonderry, to whom he said he had been bound, for more than a quarter of a century, by the ties of a most intimate and devoted friendship. The right hon. gentleman and Mrs. Disraeli stayed with Lady Londonderry.

The foreign policy of Lord Palmerston's administration had about this time to sustain a somewhat divergent influence, owing to the civil war in the temporarily *dis*-United States. This civil war, which was originally, in fact, simply a conflict between the Northern and Southern States, on the question of slavery, had arisen from the circumstance of a President of the Union having been elected who was favourable to the abolition of slavery; though neither he nor his party contemplated any present movement in that direction, beyond opposition to all attempts to enlarge the area of the slave states by permitting slavery to exist in any new state that might be added to the Federal Union. The Southerners, however, seeing that—the anti-slavery party having got into the ascendant—this alone was a foreboding of eventual, and probably not very distant abolition, at once raised the standard of rebellion—SECESSION they called it, not *rebellion;* though that, virtually, it was the latter, soon became practically indisputable, upon the Southerners calling out an army of their own, to FIGHT the Federal troops that were in the field to resist their 'secessionist' proceedings; and upon their electing a PRESIDENT *of their own*, and taking such other steps as were requisite to give effect to the establishment of a separate and independent SOUTHERN CONFEDERATION. In an incredibly short period of time, it became a most sanguinary civil war, and one resolving itself into a deadly conflict,—on the one hand for the continuance and perpetuation of negro slavery; on the other for its utter abolition, along with the perpetual maintenance of the original Federal Union in its integrity and indivisibility. The true policy of England in such a case was one of strict neutrality; so that whatever might be the issue—whether North or South prevailed—England might not have made an enemy

of the victor, or, indeed, have incurred the hostility of either side; whether as it respected the war itself, or whatever its result might be, the neutrality of England was evidently the truest wisdom, under all the circumstances of the case, as the result so signally showed.

Mr. Disraeli, with his usual political sagacity, at once saw the importance of a strictly neutral policy; and he was prompt in declaring it; nor did he shrink from upholding it, from the beginning to the end of the dreadful conflict. Not that he was one who—like Mr. Bright and his school of 'peace-at-any-price'—was in favour of a great country like England being *always* neutral as to foreign wars, whether civil wars or wars between neighbouring states. He has since, on more than one public occasion, declared his views on the question of neutrality—views in strict accordance with his policy on the occasion referred to. As, for instance, when in the House of Commons, on the Eastern question, he said,—'If neutrality depends on holding that the interests of the country are not to be maintained and vindicated, then I am no longer in favour of neutrality, but in favour of the interests of the country and the honour of the Sovereign.' Or, again, on another occasion, in a speech at the Mansion House, when he observed,—'We declared at the same time that neutrality must cease if British interests were assailed or menaced. Cosmopolitan critics, men who are the friends of every country save their own, have condemned this policy as selfish. My Lord Mayor, it is a policy as selfish as patriotism.'

If anything could have justified our *not* pursuing a neutral policy on such an occasion as that of the civil war in America, it would have been the consciousness of a sense of duty to aid in putting an end to the odious system of negro slavery among the Anglo-Saxon race across the Atlantic—a system so odious as to have called for such enormous sacrifices on our part to oppose and to exterminate it. Yet, strange to say, the desire that mainly prevailed in England to interfere in the conflict was one that sympathised with the Southerners! Even Mr. Gladstone was so impolitic as to betray southern sympathies; and on one public occasion, in the provinces, he spoke

of the prospect of a new and brotherly nation springing up in the 'Confederate States,' which it was the object of the southern rebellion to establish. The following is an extract from one of Mr. Gladstone's speeches on the subject (Oct. 15th, 1862):—'It is easy for us who have suffered, who have gone through the agonies of that dismemberment against which the English people of the United States are now struggling. We have gone through it all, and now we know that it was not a bad thing after all. We may have our own opinions about slavery; we may be for the South, or against the South, but there is no doubt, I think, about this, that Jefferson Davis and the other leaders of the South have made an army; they are making, it appears, a navy; and they are making what is more than either—they have *made a nation.* (Loud cheers.) We may anticipate for certainty the success of the Southern states, so far as regards effecting their separation from the North. I, for my own part, cannot but believe that that event is as certain as any event yet future but contingent can be (prolonged cheers); but it is from a feeling that this great event is likely to arise, and that the North will have to suffer that mortification, that I earnestly hope England will do nothing to inflict additional shame, sorrow, or pain, upon those who have already suffered much, and will probably *have to suffer more.*' (Applause.) Many Liberals, too[1]—more particularly in the Radical section of the party—were in favour of the South, on the principle that as 'the *people* are the legitimate source of *all* power,' the Southerners having the (white) *people* largely in their ranks, had a perfect right to separate from the Northern states, and become entirely independent of them, if they liked, and thereby enjoy among themselves their 'peculiar institutions' to their heart's bent, and without let or hindrance. Even some of Mr. Disraeli's usual supporters were betrayed into holding such wild opinions. But he himself remained

[1] Mr. Schofield, member for Birmingham, addressing his constituents in December, 1862, said that 'the Northerners were waging war for empire and the Southerners for independence, and he felt that the duty of this country was to recognise the Southern States. Intervention meant war, and mediation meant failure. He was for neither, but for recognition as a question of policy and prudence, on the ground that the South had shown ability to maintain its independence, and the North could not subdue it.'

inflexible; and there is no doubt that, though in opposition at the time, the influence of his sagacious and patriotic example had its due effect in restraining the, at one time, popular delusion, as to the pretended duty of assisting the South to resist what they called the 'despotism' of the North. For we all know how utterly in vain such yearning for Southern intervention became; as we likewise all know what a blessing has resulted from the triumph of the North, if only in having got rid of the curse of negro slavery.

When parliament met in February, 1864, the speech from the throne was, as usual under the Palmerstonian rule, largely occupied with references to foreign affairs. There was the Danish question —the question of the maintenance of the integrity of the Danish monarchy; there were the outrages and disturbances in Japan, the insurrection in New Zealand, and the annexation of the Ionian Islands to Greece. Of domestic policy or home events there was scarcely a mention, and the grave omission did not escape the notice of Mr. Disraeli, who expressed his astonishment that not even a passing allusion had been made to the distress in Ireland, which the population had borne with patience and loyalty. As to the foreign relations of the country, they appeared 'all in confusion.' The diplomatic efforts of the ministry were characterised by 'inconsistency and in. coherence,' which were the result of 'officious efforts and pompous menaces.' The fact was that the government wished the House to get it out of difficulties, and take the responsibility of the initiative. For his part he protested against a government without a policy. It was for government to take the lead. Lord Derby, in the House of Lords, was still more severe, and his criticisms had undoubtedly a most damaging effect. He said 'Her Majesty's government obtained office by an ingenious, if not a very ungenerous strategy. They came into power in order to supply a more extended measure of parliamentary reform, and the moment they accepted office they virtually gave up reform, and devoted themselves to foreign diplomacy, in which they had been still less successful. Lord Russell, on entering his present office, professed that his policy was non-intervention in

the affairs of other countries, the extension of Liberal principles by the exercise of our *moral* influence, and, above all, by the maintenance of a cordial and uninterrupted understanding with the Emperor of the French. On looking round it was difficult to see what country there was in which the noble lord had not interfered. In point of fact, the foreign policy of the noble lord as illustrative of non-intervention might be expressed in two short, homely, but accurate words, "meddle and muddle." (Laughter.) It had been full of lecturing, blustering, and retreating. In the "Midsummer Night's Dream," the principal performers were *Bottom*, the weaver, and *Snug*, the joiner. The noble earl appeared to combine the qualities attributed to both those persons. (Renewed laughter.) Like *Bottom*, the weaver, he was ambitious to play every part. "Oh," said the noble earl, "let me play the lion. I'll roar till it should do your heart good;" and the duke shall say, "Well roared, lion; well roared, lion." (Laughter.) But *Bottom*, the weaver, and *Snug*, the joiner, were possessed of a very anxious desire that the audience should not be too much alarmed, and therefore they made a disclosure of their intentions. The noble earl did precisely the same. The roar was the roar of the lion, but the face was the face of the noble earl.' (Laughter.)

Following up the attack from the vantage ground which had been so well secured, the Conservatives resolved in July to bring forward a direct vote of censure upon the government. The conference on the Danish question which had been held in London had proved abortive; and the resolution to be submitted to the House, whilst regretting the failure of the conference, stated that the course pursued by the government had failed to maintain their avowed policy of upholding the integrity of Denmark, and had lowered the just influence of the country in the councils of Europe, and thereby diminished the securities for peace. Mr. Disraeli introduced the resolution on the 4th of July, in a speech of great length and signal ability, and a spirited debate ensued lasting several nights, and arousing great interest throughout the country. Every evening the lobbies of the

House were crowded, and the result—a small majority for the government—was announced amidst a scene of great excitement. But the debate had had its effect, and was amply justified. It threw life and vigour into both parties, it forwarded the Conservative cause, and it tended not a little to increase the reputation of Mr. Disraeli, who, to use the words of one who was present on the occasion, 'had every reason to be proud of the popular demonstrations of admiration for his abilities.'

An incident occurred in parliament during this session with which Mr. Disraeli had nothing to do beyond performing his duty vigilantly and energetically, as was his wont, in criticising the conduct of a subordinate minister of the crown, in having allowed himself to be associated with one who, as the enemy of monarchical institutions, had in the course of his vocation got connected with some desperadoes in Paris. The minister we allude to was Mr. Stansfeld, M.P., whose Radical zeal had been rewarded by the Liberal Prime Minister in appointing him a Junior Lord of the Admiralty; and the notability with whom his name had—though apparently not altogether justly—been on this occasion associated, was none other than the notorious Italian democrat, and something more, Mazzini—'Mazzini of the dagger,' as he had come to be called. The case was this—the Procureur Imperiale of France was engaged in prosecuting a sanguinary Italian Liberal named Græco, and others, for an attempt to assassinate the Emperor of the French, and he had communicated to her Majesty's Government, through the French ambassador in London, that one of the accused conspirators in Paris had been found in possession of a letter, requesting him to write for money to carry on the work they were performing in France to Mr. Flowers, at 32, Thurloe Square, Brompton—which was Mr. Stansfeld's private residence,—Mr. Stansfeld, too, being known to be a personal friend of Mazzini's. The affair was brought before the House of Commons; and one natural and necessary consequence of it was that Mr. Stansfeld resigned his Junior Lordship. It was in the debate that arose upon this affair that Mr. Disraeli, having felt it his duty to take

part in it, as might have been expected, had occasion to animadvert rather severely on Mr. Stansfeld's conduct, as being himself a minister of the crown, though only a subordinate one, in having had any acquaintance with such men, and especially on his private house being allowed to be made use of by them; although, in justice to Mr. Stansfeld, it must be stated that he utterly denied having had any knowledge whatever of the correspondence that passed between Mazzini and his sanguinary friends, the Paris conspirators; while yet acknowledging his intimacy with Mazzini himself. What took place in the House (Feb. 28) was this:

Mr. Cox put a question to Mr. Stansfeld with respect to the charge by the imperial prosecutor that he was an accomplice in the recent plot against the Emperor of the French. Mr. Stansfeld said his attention had been directed to the speech of the imperial prosecutor, and he had read it with astonishment and indignation, that he should not only have imagined but ventured to insinuate that anyone who had a seat in the House of Commons, and, however unworthily, also occupied the position of minister of the crown, should have had any participation, or been conscious of any implication in an attempt which deserved the execration of all men. (Hear, hear.) He trusted that it would be unnecessary for him to say more; and he should feel it a degradation to be called upon to do so; he also vindicated the character of Mazzini, whom he had known intimately for eighteen years, and who, he was convinced, was incapable of the conduct attributed to him. Mr. Hennessey said that Mazzini, whose name had been needlessly introduced, had given great ground for suspicion; he had called Græco an enthusiast and a patriot. Mr. Stansfeld said that he had not the slightest knowledge of any letter or any of the proceedings. Mr. Hennessey asked if he had been collecting money for Italian patriots. Mr. Stansfeld: Never; nothing of the kind. Mr. Edward Forster said he should like to know what authority Mr. Hennessey had for his statements with respect to Mazzini. Alderman Rose said that Mazzini had lived in the same house with Mr. Stansfeld. ('Oh, oh!') The subject then dropped.

It was an unfortunate affair for any one in her Majesty's service to be supposed to be mixed up with; and Mr. Disraeli, as one who had himself more than once been highly and responsibly in the service of the crown, and was likely to be again—the leader, too, of a party in parliament and in the country which never shrunk from standing forth in defence of the monarchy—he could not but feel in duty bound not only strongly to reprobate such an affair, under any circumstances, but more particularly to denounce it as most regrettable

that any one who had been appointed to fill a responsible ministerial post, like that which Mr. Stansfeld had held, should be thought connected in any way with characters so antagonistic to *all* crowned heads, and to the monarchical forms of government that crowned heads have to do with, as Mazzini's friends were known to be. That Mr. Disraeli should—as he was taunted from the ministerial benches for doing—'vehemently' denounce it, not only as respects Mr. Stansfeld himself, but his superiors in the ministry also, the head of which had given his appointment, in order to propitiate the Red-Radical section of the Liberal party, which he represented in the government, was not only natural and reasonable, but most loyal and dutiful. For, as Mr. Disraeli pointed out with telling effect, he who was thus accused of countenancing the foreign opponents of monarchy, was himself, by the grace of Liberalism, a minister of the British crown, which at that period was on terms of peace and concord with all foreign powers.

One would have thought that, of all men in the world to come forward and appear to apologise for the proceedings of any desperate men, Mr. John Bright, as a Quaker, would be the last. His professed antipathy, that was so well known—as, indeed, that of the singular, and in many respects amiable sect to which he belonged: their antipathy to every kind of sanguinary violence is even carried so far as to condemn soldiery, to oppose military establishments, to repudiate fighting or the use of deadly weapons in any form or for any purpose, though it be in self-defence. And yet Mr. Bright, as one of them, could on this occasion, we regret to say, stand up and ask the House to 'consider what their compatriots in Italy have suffered.' These words we quote from his recorded speech on the occasion, reproaching Mr. Disraeli for the 'vehemence' of his denunciations against them, and describing the very natural and proper conduct of the opposition as 'unworthy of a great party.'

Nor did Mr. Bright confine himself to the men of whom he could so compassionately say, 'Consider what their compatriots in Italy have suffered.' He proceeded with apparent exultation to

include Mr. Disraeli himself as a *particeps criminis!* Yes; even Mr. Disraeli, he solemnly declared, had approved of assassination! He had done so—or appeared to have done—in his celebrated 'Revolutionary Epick;' a passage in that poem, he repeated, had at least all the appearance of defending assassination. Such an insinuation as this, from such a quarter, was as startling as it was insufferable. More than one hon. member was on the alert to contradict and resent it; but Mr. Disraeli himself was the most persistent to stand forth and indignantly deny it. Stretching forth his arm —so the story goes—as though to give physical force to his indignant resentment, he exclaimed in tones of impassioned eloquence, 'There is not, sir, the slightest foundation for that imputation. I give it, sir, the most unequivocal contradiction.' This prompt and decided repudiation of so unjustifiable a reproach, told powerfully upon the House, eliciting cheers so loud and enthusiastic as to render it quite unnecessary—had it, from the commotion that arose, been possible for any one to be heard—for Mr. Disraeli to say another word in his own defence. As soon as the excitement had in some degree subsided, Mr. Bright eagerly sought to explain, and succeeded in regaining for a moment the attention, nay, the applause of the House, by declaring with apparent earnestness and sincerity, and certainly with laudable candour, that he accepted the contradiction of the statement Mr. Disraeli had made. Mr. Bright's words, as subsequently reported were these: 'Doubtless, then, those who quoted writings said to be the right hon. gentleman's were in error. But I accept the right hon. gentleman's contradiction freely, though I was not about to blame him.' He was content, one may suppose, to leave it to others to do that.

To be assured of the indisputable veracity of that contradiction, it can only be necessary to consult the passage of the 'Epick' itself. Reference to the poem had induced Mr. Bright to retract, and covered him, for the moment, with some confusion. But then, it was pretended, in a *new* edition of the 'Epick' which Mr. Disraeli had published—the former being out of print, and inaccessible—the

passage in question was *garbled* to suit the occasion! Now it was quite true that a literary alteration had been made in the original, though not of such a nature as to present any material change in its meaning, or anything that it was by the author, from the first, intended to imply. The passage was this:—

> 'Dark Pharaoh's doom
> Shall cool your chariot wheels, and hallowed be
> The regicidal steel that shall redeem
> A nation's woe.'

In the former edition the imprecation was a little more diffuse, though to precisely the same effect, thus:—

> 'Pharaoh's doom
> Shall cool those chariot wneels now hot with blood;
> And blessed be the hand that dares to wave
> The regicidal steel that shall redeem
> A nation's sorrow with a tyrant's blood.'

But then, after all, had there really been any difference, however great,—any 'garbling,' as was imputed, to suit the exigency of a reproduction,—if any such there had been, it could have nothing to do with fixing upon Mr. Disraeli the imputation of 'defending assassination.' For they were not *his*, the author's, sentiments or wishes that were expressed in the lines, but those of *Lyridon!* It is Lyridon who speaks in the passage, not Disraeli! As well charge Shakspeare, Addison, Massinger, Rowe, or any other dramatic or epic writer, with the vicious, and often atrocious sentiments, menaces, or maledictions which their several tragic heroes and heroines are made to utter, as occasion requires, as to accuse Mr. Disraeli of *defending* either *assassination or any other atrocity*, because some fictitious character in his multifarious writings had to be represented as using the language of sanguinary denunciation, or murderous revenge.

CHAPTER XXV.

MR. DISRAELI AND THE CHURCH.

'The Church of England is not a mere depository of doctrine. It is a part of England; it is a part of our strength, a part of our liberties, and a part of our national character.'—*Disraeli.*

WE are now about to observe Mr. Disraeli in constitutional connection with that department of the British constitution to which, as a British statesman, he was naturally, not to say necessarily attached, and, whether as a Minister, or a Privy Councillor of the crown, under a solemn obligation to defend and maintain. The Church of England is part and parcel of the constitution of England. Our constitution is a 'Constitution in Church and State.' And this constitutional connection Mr. Disraeli never disregarded or depreciated. Closely connected with the Church of England are the ancient universities of Oxford and Cambridge: universities that are of greater antiquity than the colleges themselves, which constitute the universities such important seats of learning, as well as of education. Oxford University, for instance, obtained its charter, bestowing upon it a chancellor of its own, so long ago as 1244; while its oldest college (Merton) was not founded until the following century. The universities were chartered as nurseries of the church; and the colleges were founded, not by or for the state, but by individual churchmen, mostly by bishops and clergy, for the church: they are autonomic corporations, and are only connected with the university through their members. These historic facts and constitutional principles have been too generally ignored, as the universities and colleges know to their cost, both by Conservative and Liberal politicians. But Mr. Disraeli would seem to have ever borne them in mind; and perhaps no statesman of modern times did more, if so much, according to his opportunities, to enjoin and to enforce them.

For some years, during the earlier period of Mr. Disraeli's public life, he was, as respects the universities and the church, completely eclipsed by his political rival, Mr. Gladstone. Mr. Disraeli never presumed to make such high-flown professions of reverence and regard for the ecclesiastical elements of the British constitution as Mr. Gladstone so ostentatiously did on his entrance to parliament, by the publication of his able but now self-exploded work, 'The State in its Relations with the Church.' He never so formally or so emphatically insisted, as Mr. Gladstone, in that volume and by other means did, that 'the state, in rejecting the church, would actively violate its most solemn duty, and would, if the theory of the connection be sound (as he maintained it was), entail on itself a curse.' He never gravely and anxiously declared that 'we must disregard the din of political contention, and the pressure of worldly and momentary motives, and in behalf of our regard to man, as well as of our allegiance to God, maintain amongst ourselves, where happily it still exists, the union between church and state.' He did not, with solemn warning, pronounce that 'Upon us of this day has fallen—and we shrink not from it, but welcome it as a high and glorious, though arduous duty—the defence of the Reformed Catholic Church of Ireland as the religious establishment of the country.' He did not, we say, make all these solemn avowals, and thereby contract such serious personal obligations, and then see reason to fly in the face of them all, and scatter all their sacred responsibilities to the winds. No: Mr. Disraeli did not ostentatiously and solemnly commit himself, as Mr. Gladstone thus did, only to turn round and rashly reverse his vehement professions, change his principles, and forsake his cause. No: *he* was true as steel to the obligations which Mr. Gladstone discarded—as faithful as the other was faithless, if not to formal vows, yet to undeniable obligations—to those principles and that cause—to the close of his valuable life and patriotic career.

It was at Oxford—in the Sheldonian Theatre of that famous university—in November, 1864, that there was enacted what we are preparing to relate in testimony of Mr. Disraeli's regard for the

church, and in illustration also of the recognition which Oxford nobly and so exultingly gave to him, as the friend and the defender of its ancient revered university, not less than of the church whose handmaid that university was designed to be.

Mr. Disraeli had not had the advantage, as Mr. Gladstone had, of being a university man. Yet this did not appear to have the slightest effect in interfering with the heartiness and the enthusiasm of his reception.

It was not, we may remark, the first public occasion of Mr. Disraeli visiting Oxford, or of his receiving virtually, though incidentally, the enthusiastic greetings and plaudits of the university; and as that other occasion was also one of great interest and importance, we shall be excused, we trust, if we here give a brief notice of it before proceeding to describe his second public appearance, some few years later, in the Sheldonian Theatre aforesaid, at the invitation of the Bishop of Oxford and a large body of the more distinguished members of the university.

It is probable that Mr. Disraeli, in his youth more particularly, had been at Oxford in a private capacity, though he had never had the privilege and the advantage of having any connection with the university. But that he knew intimately its distinguished and attractive character, whether for classical study or social enjoyment, he has frequently shown in his writings and in his speeches. As, for instance, in his novel of 'Venetia,' where he says,—'Oxford is a most interesting seat of learning. Whether we consider its antiquity, its learning, the influence it has exercised upon the history of the country, its magnificent endowments, its splendid buildings, its great colleges, libraries, and museums, or that it is one of the principal head-quarters of all the hope of England, our youth, it is not too much to affirm that there is scarcely a spot on the face of the globe of equal interest or importance.' The writer of these pages has had occasion, too, in a work of fiction, to say of it, in terms as eulogistic, though not, he fears, in tones so euphonic, by any means, as Mr. Disraeli's, that 'although the city of Oxford owes

everything to its ancient and renowned university, it yet has many claims to importance on purely civic grounds. That it is one of the most beautiful cities in Europe is of course mainly, if not wholly, attributable to its colleges and halls, with their towers and spires, their chapels and cloisters, their porches and quadrangles, their gardens and grounds, together with its noble libraries and interesting museums; and, last but not least, that rich display of churches which owe their grandeur, if not their very existence, to collegiate influence and munificence. But the town itself is handsome, and its situation beautiful. It can boast, too, of great antiquity; for it is certain that it was fortified in Saxon times, if it was not, long before, a Roman fortress.'

Such, then, was the highly interesting and attractive place in which Mr. Disraeli was to make his public appearance, and to be one, at least, of 'the observed of all observers,' in the train of the university's noble Chancellor, the Earl of Derby, who was there, in all due pomp and state, to undergo the imposing ceremonial of installation, as the fitly chosen successor of the great Arthur, Duke of Wellington, in that high and honourable office. Mr. Disraeli was not only conspicuous as an honoured attendant on the new Chancellor —whose lieutenant, politically, he was—but also as one of a roll of eminent notabilities on whom the honorary degree of D.C.L. was conferred by the new Chancellor himself *in propria persona*, and the call of whose name elicited almost louder and more enthusiastic plaudits than any others that shared the honour with him, from the distinguished assemblage with which the Sheldonian was so densely and so picturesquely packed.

Oxford—university and city alike—was thoroughly and splendidly *en fete;* and, his duties at the Sheldonian duly discharged, Mr. Disraeli was lionized with marked distinction, being conducted by alternate collegiate and civic guides to every object of remarkable interest both in the university and city, and appeared to be much delighted with everything that was pointed out to him, most of which he, apparently, had never seen, or at least examined, before. A crowd,

composed principally of undergraduates, followed his footsteps in all directions, frequently cheering him; and with some of whom he, ever and anon, entered into animated conversation. In afterwards passing through 'Tom Quad' at Christ Church, with a few friends, a sudden rush of 'gentlemen commoners' from their collegiate rooms —more than one of whom have since been his colleagues in high office —suddenly surrounded him, and rather clamorously, though with cordial respect, called on him to address them; which he did in a few well-chosen sentences of courteous acknowledgment for the kindly warmth of their reception of him on this his most gratifying visit to their grand university, and of cordial congratulation on their having installed that day so distinguished a Chancellor as his noble friend, Lord Derby, was universally recognized to be; together with his sincere and hearty good wishes for their success in the honours and distinctions which it was, doubtless, their highest and worthiest ambition to obtain. This brief but eloquent and well-timed address excited immense enthusiasm, and the cheering being heard far beyond the collegiate precincts, the quadrangle immediately became the scene of so dense a crowd of excited *townsmen* as well as *gownsmen*, that Mr. Disraeli was glad to accept the pressing offer of a 'gentleman commoner,' who was not unknown to him, to take refuge in his apartments until the crowd had dispersed.

At the same time he partook generally, and apparently with much gratification, in the various attractive festivities which had been provided by the university, and most of the colleges, for the auspicious occasion, and where, with a consideration scarcely inferior to that shown to the noble Chancellor himself, he was treated as their highly distinguished guest.

It was a general remark, by both 'gown and town,' on the memorable occasion, that certainly, next to the Chancellor of the University, the most popular personage present was Benjamin Disraeli, their new D.C.L.

What is here stated, as the recollection of the writer, respecting Mr. Disraeli's reception on the occasion referred to, we find fully

confirmed by the *Oxford University Herald* at the time:—'Most gratifying,' it is there observed, 'must it have been to Lord Derby —a grateful recompense, indeed, for his long endurance as a Conservative leader—to meet with so hearty, so enthusiastic a reception as that which is greeting him on every hand; and his feelings of delight and satisfaction must be in no slight degree heightened by his witnessing that heartiness and cordiality extended to so many of his political associates: to his right-hand man, Mr. Disraeli, more especially, the enthusiasm of whose reception in the Sheldonian Theatre yesterday quite equalled anything ever witnessed within those classic walls, so familiar with such scenes; while his every movement elsewhere, whether among the *élite* of the university or the commonalty of the city, has excited, and is still exciting, the liveliest interest, and eliciting from all the profoundest respect.' This was said in a leading article published while the festive proceedings were still going on. From the report of them we find it observed, 'The next cry that caught our ear was that of "Disraeli and Protection," which was at first received rather equivocally, but soon met with a more favourable reception. We may here mention that the name of Mr. Disraeli was subsequently called out over and over again—sometimes alone, at other times in conjunction with political expletives—and it invariably elicited most unequivocal marks of very cordial approbation.' According to the same authority, there was, in the immense cheering which greeted the entrance of the noble Chancellor's procession into the theatre, a decidedly distinct outburst of applause when Mr. Disraeli was recognised, which was enthusiastically renewed when he stood forward to receive at the hands of his noble friend and colleague, the Chancellor, the honorary degree of D.C.L.

The next public visit of Mr. Disraeli to Oxford—to which what we have here only too faintly sketched is meant as an introduction —was of a very different character, and had quite another purpose; though it, too, was a visit he was invited to make, and one which again made him the object of exciting interest, and this in a still higher and wider sphere, embracing, as it did, along with a due

recognition of the university itself—whose famous Sheldonian Theatre was again the scenic centre of attraction—the Church of England, to which the university so rightfully belongs, and whose cause, in one of its most important practical economies, the great statesman had been induced by his devoted diocesan to attend there to sustain with his powerful eloquence. Ostensibly it was a meeting to support the Oxford Diocesan Society for the Augmentation of Small Livings, of which Mr. Disraeli himself was a member. But his presence raised it far above that object in interest and importance; and his speech on the occasion—which was separately printed, and widely circulated in a pamphlet form—took a comprehensive review of the whole church policy, and of the current church questions of the day, constituting it an invaluable church manifesto, from the lips of an intelligent and earnest layman. It is on this account that we think it of importance to give prominence to the event, as well to aid in serving the interests of the church, as to exhibit Mr. Disraeli as the well-informed and right-minded English churchman he was, but which he did not generally get the credit of being. The eminent diocesan (Bishop Wilberforce) presided on the occasion, supported by a host of the nobility and gentry of the diocese—of whom Mr. Disraeli was not the least distinguished—along with most of the dignitaries of the university, and several prominent members of parliament.

One of the resolutions in support of the society having been put into Mr. Disraeli's hands to second, he at once stood forward to address the distinguished throng before him, and was received with great enthusiasm. The resolution, he said, was one that he could heartily second, because it expressed what, in that part of the diocese with which he was more immediately connected, and which, in a certain sense, he might say he represented there that day, he had hitherto exerted himself to the utmost to uphold. Some degree of sympathy, he perhaps might admit, had been shown; but the general result had not, in his opinion, been adequate to the greatness of the cause and to the important character of the movement. And

in considering this delicate subject, upon which, he said, it was expedient to have clear ideas, he entered at once upon the great practical object in view—that, namely, of adapting the machinery of the church to the ever-fluctuating circumstances in the condition of the nation. But there was a difficulty, he showed, in doing this, arising from the distraction among churchmen occasioned mainly by the anomaly which had arisen the moment that the political constitution of the country had adopted the principle of religious liberty. 'The parliament of England had been a lay synod until that change, and the party who are opposed to the church naturally said: If you have a legislature in the hands of those not in communion with the church, your boasted union between church and state must expire, and the fall of the church is at hand. Under these circumstances,' he continued, 'if we had only to meet the natural opponents of the church, I think the prospect of the church would not have been so difficult. But, unfortunately, some of the best friends of the church—men who from their elevated character, sincere principle, learning, and devotion, could not for a moment be looked upon with an eye other than friendly by the church and churchmen—became so alarmed by what they considered the logical consequence of that revolution, that they, although for perfectly distinct and contrary purposes, counselled the same policy as the anti-church party—dissolution of the union between church and state.' No doubt there was something in this to account for such institutions in the church as Mr. Disraeli was advocating not being supported as they deserved. But it was not so much any anomaly that had arisen, as it was the political influences that prevailed. An active portion of the Radical party, for instance, consisted of an admixture of opponents of the church, and opponents of all religious creeds. It was a party, and still is, which has an interminable and unavoidable 'tail,'—a 'residuum'—and this is all, more or less, not only anti-church but anti-religious. And, unhappily, there were Liberals of higher and better religious and moral aspirations, who were too often content, for the sake of party and popularity, to allow themselves to be politically affected by such influences.

Far happier, we cannot but think, was Mr. Disraeli in some other of his discoveries of the cause of apathy and unconcern, among professing churchmen, for the interests of the church. One of these was the prevalence of a kind of 'religious liberty,' which was only too apt an illustration of the apostle's meaning when he cautioned his Asiatic disciples against 'using their liberty as a cloak of maliciousness,'—a perversion, an abuse of whatever may deserve the name of 'religious liberty,' to which so much of disregard and indifference, so much of heresy and schism, may undoubtedly be traced. And the enemies of the church, Mr. Disraeli showed, had used this as an argument against the very existence of the Established Church—against its necessity, or even its expediency; since dissent had, it was pretended, got ahead of the church, and science was proving that the church herself was founded in error. These two plausible but fatal fallacies he very readily and most effectually scattered to the winds; and this before a crowded assemblage of the highest intellects, the most deeply learned, the most thoroughly cultured, the brightest examples, in short, of cultivated, ennobled, and refined human nature, that could probably have been brought together within the spacious walls of such an edifice, or within the confines of such a seat of learning; and by whom it was received with continuous indications of heartiest approval and admiration.

As regards the effect of such opposition to the Church of England, it had, he said, been held that it was impossible the church could long maintain itself in this country, in consequence of the spread of dissent. But during this period of transition they had fallen on a statistical age. Statistics were studied by the nation, and they discovered that there had not been an increasing spread of dissent; on the contrary, dissent had diminished—he spake of true religious dissent. The descendants of the Puritan families—whom he would always mention with that respect which their high qualities and historical character deserved—had almost all merged in the church itself; and the tendency of the age was no longer favourable to hostile rivalry among religious bodies, but rather led to virtual, though

not formal, co-operation between religious communities and consistories; that, in fact, there was no reason for supposing the church, on the ground of dissent or any other opposition, could not be retained in its original and constitutional position.

With respect to the second plausible fallacy—that science was undermining the very foundations of the church—he contended that already it was seen through, as altogether hollow and delusive. The progress of science had doubtless done wonderful things, but it had done nothing that ought to shake our belief in divine truth; notwithstanding the boldness with which it had been proclaimed, in certain quarters, that many recent scientific discoveries were not consistent with the doctrines of the church. 'Now I am sure,' he observed, 'there is not one in this theatre who is not prepared to do full justice to the merits of scientific men, and who does not fully appreciate those discoveries of science which have added so much to the conveniences of life, and to the comforts of man. But it is of great importance, when this tattle about science is mentioned, that we should annex to the phrase precise ideas. I hold that the function of science is the interpretation of nature, and the interpretation of the highest nature is the highest science. And what is the highest nature? Man is the highest nature. But I must say that, when I compare the interpretation of the highest nature by the most advanced, the most fashionable and modish school of modern science, with some other teachings with which we are familiar, I am not prepared to say that the lecture-room is more scientific than the church. What is the question now placed before society with a glib assurance the most astounding? The question is this—Is man an ape, or an angel? My Lord Bishop, *I* am on the side of the angels!'—an allusion and an illustration the amusing aptitude and the convincing force of which made the classic walls of venerable Sheldonia ring and reverberate with mingled laughter and applause.

When the excitement had somewhat subsided, Mr. Disraeli, assuming a graver tone, emphatically added,—'My lord, I repudiate those views with indignation and abhorrence. I believe they are

foreign to the conscience of humanity: more than that, even in the strictest intellectual point of view, I believe the severest metaphysical analysis is opposed to their conclusions. But, on the other hand, what does the church teach us? What is its interpretation of the highest nature? It teaches us that man is made in the image of his Creator (loud applause) a source of inspiration, and of solace —a source from which only can flow every right principle of morals, and every divine truth. (Renewed applause.) I say, then, that when we are told that the teachings of the church are not consistent with the discoveries of science, and that in that sense the inferiority of the church is shown, I totally deny the proposition. I say that the scientific teaching of the church upon the most important of all subjects is, in fact, infinitely superior to anything that has been brought forward by any of these new discoveries. In fact, it is between those two contending interpretations of the nature of man, and their consequences, that society will have to decide. Their rivalry is at the bottom of all human affairs. Upon our acceptance of the divine interpretation, for which we are indebted to the church, and of which the church is the guardian, all sound and salutary legislation depends: that of Truth being the only security for civilisation, the only guarantee of real progress,'—a declaration which, falling from the lips of so eminent a statesman, and so great a legislator, naturally called forth fresh bursts of enthusiastic cheering from all parts of the theatre.

Equally successful was the eloquent speaker—and scarcely less important were his impassioned utterances—when he exposed the unrealities and inconsistencies of those who, while professing to be churchmen, yet gloried in repudiating fundamental tenets of the church, and slighted those, her ancient and authorised formularies which repeat and retain such tenets in the sacred services of her sanctuaries. Among the clergy, when they degenerate into latitudinarianism, such pernicious errors, as we all know, are apt to prevail; but it is principally the latitudinarian laity to whom he refers, when he further says: 'There is another point in connection with this subject which

I cannot help noticing on the present occasion. It is the common cry—the common blunder—that articles of faith and religious creeds are the arms of a clergy, and are framed to tyrannise over a land. They are exactly the reverse. The precise creed, and the strict article, are the title-deeds of the laity to the religion which has descended to them. And whenever these questions have been brought before parliament, I have always opposed alterations or omissions of creeds, articles, and subscriptions, on this very ground, on this broad principle: that the security and certainty which they furnish are the special privileges of the laity, and that you cannot tell in what position the laity may find themselves if that security be withdrawn.'

It is principally to the clergy of the same perverted persuasion as those of the laity with whom he had thus expostulated, that he so pointedly refers, when he further remarks: 'Perhaps I ought to apologise for having touched upon this subject; but it appears to me—I know it, indeed, from my own experience—to be one vitally connected with the affairs that have called us here to-day, because the opinions of the new school are paralysing the efforts of many who ought to be our friends. Let us venture to ask ourselves this question: Will those opinions succeed? Is there a possibility of their success? My conviction is that they will fail. I wish to do justice to the acknowledged talents, the influence and information, which the new party command; but I am of opinion they will fail, for two reasons. In the first place, having examined all their writings, I believe without any exception, whether they consist of fascinating eloquence, diversified learning, and picturesque sensibility (laughter) —I speak seriously what I feel—and that, too, exercised by one honoured in this university, and whom to know is to admire and regard; or whether you find them in the cruder conclusions of prelates who appear to me to have commenced their theological studies after they grasped the crosier (loud cheers and laughter) and who introduce to society their obsolete discoveries with startling wonder, and the frank ingenuousness of their own savages (great laughter and

cheers); or whether I read the lucubrations of nebulous professors (laughter) who seem in their style to have revived chaos (loud cheers); or, lastly, whether it be the provincial arrogance and the precipitate self-complacency which flash and flare in an *Essay* or *Review* (cheers and laughter, and a hiss), I find that the common characteristic of all their writings is this, that their learning is always second-hand.' (Cheers and laughter, and slight hisses, followed by immense cheering).

In quoting from the speech as published at the request of the Diocesan societies, we have, in the above extract, given the interruptions of cheering, laughter, and hissing, in order to mark the significance of the sentences that called them forth; and especially do we include the hisses, as proceeding, of course, from those who were personally feeling the force of the allusions that provoked them, and whose consciences were doubtless being pricked thereby. Coming from a layman, and one so capable of comprehending, and so careful in discriminating, they whom the cap so evidently fit, or their friends and followers—whether clerical or episcopal—could not, one would do them the justice to think, but feel some slight pang of shame, as well as some emotion of displeasure; and if hissing afforded them even a momentary relief, one could not, in mercy, grudge them its enjoyment.

Several observations on parties in the church were brought in by Mr. Disraeli with telling effect. He was not there, he said, to deny, or to regret, the existence of parties in the church. Parties had always existed there. They existed in the church at Jerusalem, and in the church at Ephesus, and in the church at Rome; and it would indeed be most wonderful if in a country like England, where party has always been recognised as a most efficient and satisfactory method of conducting public affairs, the church alone should be without such an agency. He then particularly and pointedly asked, 'What is party?' And the question he himself at once distinctly and forcibly answered thus: 'Party is organised opinion. And so long as the nature of man is of that various and varying character which we

all know it is, so long will there be various and varying modes by which it will express itself, or by which it may be counselled, upon religious matters. There are some,' he continued, 'who find solace in symbolic ceremonies, and who feel that the religious sentiment can only be adequately satisfied by ecclesiastical services in that vein. There are others with whom the soul requires to be sustained by the emotions of spiritual enthusiasm. But so long as they who counsel or pursue these several modes meet on the common platform of church principles—and I hold that the acknowledgment of the church as the sacred depository of divine truth is one of the truest church principles—I do not think that such courses are to be regretted, but on the whole I have no doubt both schools of religious feeling have been beneficial, and equally advantageous, to society and to the church. I believe, indeed, that the two great parties in the church may have effected as eminent services for true religion, as the two great parties in the state have achieved for public liberty and the good government of the country.' (Loud cheering.)

There was at least one party in the church, however, he proceeded to point out, which could never be tolerated—or, at any rate, recognised—as a church party, if only because it was not merely inadmissible on 'the common platform of church principles,' but was devoid of all principle whatever, except the destructive one—if one it could be called—of ultimately doubting and disbelieving almost everything that was, with any authority, acknowledged as religious. It was a party that boasted of its breadth—of its comprehensiveness—and one that sought to include all who declined to be 'tied and bound,' as they profanely called it, even within the limits of that Divine Authority which was 'the Church's One Foundation.' Mr. Disraeli then thus felicitously gave this outline of that obnoxious and pernicious party:—'Hitherto there has been nothing new in a church party aiming at the comprehensive; but then they have always wished to include those who believed *anything*, whereas the remarkable peculiarity of the comprehension of the party to which I now refer is, that they seem to wish to include everybody who believes *nothing*:'

a remark the amusing force and application of which, as illustrating the plain facts of the case, served to call forth another outburst of laughter and applause.

But it was too serious a matter to be thus facetiously and slightly disposed of. For there was no doubt, Mr. Disraeli declared, that the influence of such a party was most injurious to religion and the church; 'and if we attempt,' he said, 'to get rid of the difficulty by avoiding to speak out, we, in fact, do not remedy our position, but the deleterious process from which we are suffering goes on without any effort on our part to oppose its evil consequences.' It must be most unwise, therefore, he contended, and most dangerous, to treat the existence and the influence of this only too popular party with mere contempt. Rather let it be at once considered whether the difficulties which no doubt exist are insuperable,—whether they must necessarily be yielded to, or whether there is a prospect of overcoming them. He then thus explicitly described the character and principle of the organisation in question:—'Now this party is not founded on the principle of authority, on which all church parties hitherto in this country, and in all countries, in some degree, have been founded. But it is founded on a very singular principle. It is founded on the principle of criticism. Now, doubt is an element of criticism, and the tendency of criticism is necessarily sceptical. I use the epithet in a philosophical, and not in a popular or odious sense. It is quite possible, for example, that a party founded upon the principle of criticism may arrive at conclusions which we may deem monstrous. They may, for example, reject inspiration as a principle, and miracles as a practice—that is possible. And I think it quite logical that, having arrived at such conclusions, they should repudiate creeds and reject articles of faith, because creeds and articles of faith cannot exist, or be sustained, without acknowledging the principle of inspiration and the practice of miracles. All this I admit. But what I do not understand, and what I wish to draw the attention of this assembly, and of the country generally, to, is this: that having arrived at these conclusions, having arrived conscientiously

at the result, that with their opinions they must repudiate creeds and reject articles, they should not carry their principles to their legitimate end, but that, repudiating creeds and rejecting articles, they are still sworn supporters of ecclesiastical establishments, fervent upholders of dignitaries of the church—even of deans, rectors, vicars, and curates. Now this is a matter of most serious importance, not merely for us to consider as churchmen, but for the country generally to consider, whatever may be its opinions or forms of faith, for the consequences may be very critical. If it be true, as I am often told it is, that the age of faith has passed away, then the fact of having a hierarchy, a vast hierarchy, supported by men of high cultivation, brilliant talents and eloquence, and perhaps some ambition, with no distinctive opinions, might be a very harmless state of affairs, and it would not certainly be a very permanent one. But then, my lord, instead of believing that the age of faith has passed away, when I observe what is passing around us,—what is taking place in this country, and not only in this country, but in other countries, and even hemispheres,—instead of believing that the age of faith has passed away, I hold that the characteristic of the present age is a craving credulity. (Laughter.) Why, my lord, man is born to believe. (Cheers.) And if no church comes forward with its title-deeds of truth, sustained by the tradition of sacred ages, and by the conviction of countless generations, to guide him, he will find altars and idols in his own heart, and his own imagination. (Cheers.) But observe this. What must be the relations of a powerful church, without distinctive creeds, with a being of such a nature? Why, of course, the chief principle of political economy will be observed. Where there is a great demand there will be a proportionate supply; and commencing, as the new school may, by rejecting the principle of inspiration, it will end by every priest becoming a prophet; and beginning, as they do, by repudiating the practice of miracles, before long, rest assured, we shall be living in a flitting scene of spiritual phantasmagoria. (Cheers and laughter.) There are no tenets, however extravagant, and no practices, however

objectionable, which will not in time develope under such a state of affairs: opinions the most absurd, and ceremonies the most revolting—

"*Qualia demens*
Ægyptus portenta colat,"—

perhaps to be followed by the incantations of Canidiæ and the Corybanthian howl.' (Great cheering.)

The effect of this upon such an assemblage as that which listened to it with evidently the deepest interest and emotion was quite electrical. We have interspersed in our extract a few of the demonstrations of excitement it produced in 'cheers' and 'laughter.' But, after all, it was one of those scenes which must be personally witnessed and felt to be fully understood and appreciated.

Mr. Disraeli had all throughout this remarkable and memorable speech put the church—the Church of England—distinctly and properly in the foreground, as that divine agency by which such manifest and multiform national evils as he had so opportunely and so discriminatingly glanced at were to be resisted and overcome; and he wound up his eloquent and impressive address by reminding the distinguished throng whose approbation and applause he had so powerfully called forth, that it was by maintaining and strengthening the church's sacred ministrations that the great object in view was to be attained. 'And it is,' he declared, 'to promote, to foster, and to extend in this country—but mainly, of course, to-day, in this diocese—the work of that church that we are assembled here. Let us support in spirit the resolution which has been moved by my right hon. friend: let us act with united energy, with that cordial co-operation which, if churchmen share, they will carry everything before them; and, having successfully discarded all the attempts which for some time appeared to paralyse our efforts, and circulate distrust among us, by those who are the avowed opponents of the church, let us equally discard the fanciful ideas of this new party in the church, which have extended only because persons are always captivated by assumed novelty, but which I think I have shown have no genuine claim to that title. And let us by our united efforts support that

church policy to which I adverted at the commencement of my observations, and especially the action of these diocesan institutions.' Thus plainly and practically Mr. Disraeli concluded one of the most able and eloquent, and, for its purpose, perhaps, one of the most appropriate and most effective speeches he ever delivered, whether in or out of parliament. And the impression it produced upon certainly no ordinary assembly of highly educated and enlightened, and thoughtful Englishmen, was significantly shown by the closing incident which the reporter, as in duty bound, took care thus duly to notify: that 'the right hon. gentleman resumed his seat amidst vehement and protracted cheering.'

It was distinctly a church meeting; and Mr. Disraeli's speech, on its subsequent publication at the instance of the Diocesan societies, is not inappropriately headed 'CHURCH POLICY.' And yet, with the view, no doubt, of showing that it was for an object in which the laity have no mere secondary interest, after the subject had been introduced to the meeting, in an address of great vigour and eloquence by the bishop of the diocese, the series of resolutions adopted were all moved and supported by laymen, most of them members of parliament.

The greatest value and interest attached to Mr. Disraeli's most effective speech, through the circumstances of the great eminence he had now attained as a statesman, of the high position he occupied as a legislator, and of his being an ex-minister of the crown, and, at that time, likely, nay sure, to be shortly restored to such high office again, which soon afterwards was the case. It is, unfortunately, but rare that statesmen, and legislators, and ministers of the crown, are to be found so thoroughly intelligent on the subject of the church as Mr. Disraeli showed himself to be, possessing such sound views upon it, and evincing so much earnestness in it, as he undoubtedly did.

It is with special reference to one in Mr. Disraeli's high public position, with the influence as a statesman, and the responsibilities, moreover, as a churchman, which that position and that influence

imposed, that an eminent writer[1] on Christian politics has thus remarked,—'He is bound to maintain and secure the church in all its existing privileges and advantages. He may not be allowed to grant more; but he cannot be forced to take away what it possesses already. There is no sin in inability to become its "nursing father and its nursing mother;" but there is sin, deep and deadly sin, in robbing or degrading it further. And rather than become an accomplice in such acts, he must withdraw from public life; and, having uttered his solemn protestation, he must leave the crime to other men.' This is just what Sir Roundell Palmer (now Lord Selborne) afterwards so nobly set the example of doing, when Mr. Gladstone announced his intention of disendowing the Irish Church, and offered high office to Sir Roundell Palmer in return for his powerful assistance. Mr. Disraeli did not need the influence of such an example, on any occasion whatever during his long and eventful career of parliamentary and official life. *He* ever steadfastly set his face against depriving the church, whether in England or in Ireland, not only of any of its ancient endowments, but of any of its 'existing privileges and advantages.' To say nothing of the sacrilege of despoiling a divine institution like the church of its lawful possessions, on the common, the secular ground of its being corporate property —a ground to which mere politicians are apt to attach the greatest importance — Mr. Disraeli emphatically declared in the House of Commons, in the debate on Mr. Gladstone's bill for the disendowment and disestablishment of the Irish Church (to which we shall shortly have to refer)—'If there be any corporate property the confiscation of which I most dislike, it is church property, and for these reasons: church property is to a certain extent an intellectual tenure; in a greater and higher degree, a moral and spiritual tenure. It is, too, the fluctuating patrimony of the great body of the people. It is, I will not say the only, but—even with our most developed civilization —it is the easiest method by which the sons of the middle and even the working classes can become landed proprietors, and, what

[1] Professor Sewell, of Oxford.

is more, can become resident landed proprietors, and fulfil all the elevating duties incident to the position.' This, we say, is quite apart from that incomparably higher reason—the solemn question of sacrilege, which is defined by the greatest of English lexicographers as 'the crime of appropriating or alienating what is devoted to religion, —the crime of robbing heaven,—the crime of violating or profaning things sacred.'

Mr. Disraeli, we repeat, ever steadfastly opposed not only everything approximating even to such a 'crime,' with whatever plausible 'expediency' it was sought to be excused, but everything that bore the character of a deprivation of sacred rights and privileges. He had a due appreciation of its political and social utility, as well as of its sacred, its spiritual influences; as witness such incidental and constantly recurring avowals as these:—'The Church of England is not a mere depository of doctrine. The Church of England is a part of England—it is a part of our strength, and a part of our liberties, a part of our national character. It is a principal barrier against the centralizing supremacy which has been, in other countries, so fatal to liberty.'—*(Speech in House of Commons on Church-rates Abolition Bill, Feb. 27th, 1861.)* 'The strength of the Church of England is this: that, not being a stipendiary of the state, it is not afraid of being just; and, while professing to be *entirely* in theory, and *actually* being very greatly in practice, the church of the nation, it could still favour the complete development of the principle of religious liberty.'—*(Speech in House of Commons on Prison Ministers Bill, May 7th, 1863.)* 'It is because there is an established church that we have achieved religious liberty, and enjoy religious toleration; and without the union of the church with the state, I do not see what security there would be either for religious liberty or toleration.' —*(Speech in House of Commons on Irish Church Bill, March 18th, 1869.)* 'What I understand by the union of church and state is an arrangement which renders the state religious by investing authority with the highest sanction that can influence the sentiments and convictions, and consequently the conduct of the subject; whilst, on the

other hand, that union renders the church—using the epithet in its noblest and purest sense—political: that is to say, it blends civil authority with ecclesiastical influence; it defines and defends the rights of the laity, and prevents the church from subsiding into a sacerdotal corporation.'—*(Speech in House of Commons on Irish Church Bill, March 18th, 1869.)* These are testimonies to the value and the utility of the church, and they are but samples of the large assortment that have been given by Mr. Disraeli, and may be found scattered throughout the pages of *Hansard*, which demonstrate beyond all dispute his high appreciation of our constitution, as a 'constitution in church and state,' and of his fitness, therefore, to be entrusted with its maintenance and support, whether as a faithful and responsible minister of the crown, or a loyal and constitutional member of the legislature.

It may be interesting to note, as bearing on the subject of Mr. Disraeli and the church, the chief ecclesiastical appointments made by him. He nominated the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Tait), the Bishop of London (Dr. Jackson), the Bishop of Durham (Dr. Lightfoot), the Bishop of Hereford (Dr. Atlay), the Bishop of Lincoln (Dr. Wordsworth), the Bishop of Peterborough (Dr. Magee), the Bishop of Rochester (Dr. Thorold), the Bishop of St. Albans (Dr. Claughton), on translation from Rochester; the Bishop of St. David's (Dr. Basil Jones), the Bishop of Lichfield (Dr. M'Lagan), and the Bishop of Sodor and Man (Dr. Rowley Hill); while he recommended the first Bishops of the new Sees of Truro and Liverpool (Dr. Benson and Dr. Ryle). The ex-Premier also nominated the Rev. A. Purey Cust to the Deanery of York; Dr. Bickersteth to the Deanery of Lichfield (both having been Archdeacons of Buckingham); the Hon. George Herbert to the Deanery of Hereford, the Rev. Dr. Stewart Perowne to the Deanery of Peterborough, Dr. Burgon to the Deanery of Chichester, the Hon. Grantham Yorke to the Deanery of Worcester, and on his decease, Lord A. Compton to the same; and the Rev. G. D. Boyle to the Deanery of Salisbury. Lord Beaconsfield likewise appointed Canon Gregory to St. Paul's, Canon Leighton

to Westminster, Canon Birch to Ripon, Canon Bright to Oxford, and Canons Forester and Fleming to York—a series of appointments sufficiently illustrative in themselves of the soundness of Mr. Disraeli's judgment and the wisdom of his choice.

The year following the famous address at Oxford on church questions—namely, in July, 1865—the sixth parliament of the Queen came to an end, having lasted its full time, and there was an appeal to the country. The subjects more prominently before the public mind were those of the church, on which Mr. Disraeli had ably endeavoured to instruct the public mind, and of reform; and, though there was no definite and avowed appeal to the electors on either of these questions—parliament being ended, as we have said, by efflux of time—Mr. Disraeli took occasion to make some forcible remarks upon them in his election address. Dwelling briefly on the subject of reform, he pointed out that the Conservatives had for six years endeavoured to 'educate the public mind'—a similar phrase subsequently uttered has become historic—and to 'bring to the final solution a decision more matured.' Public opinion might not yet be ripe enough for legislation, but the question could, nevertheless, be pondered over with advantage. In reference to the church he said, with great truth and power,—'The maintenance of a national church involves the question whether the principle of religion shall be an element of our political constitutions; whether the state shall be consecrated; or whether, dismissing the sanctions that appeal to the higher feelings of man, our scheme of government shall degenerate into a mere system of police. I see nothing in such a result but the corruption of nations and the fall of empires.' It was in this same election address that he introduced the well known sentiment—'Place without power may gratify the vain, but can never satisfy a noble ambition;' at the same time eloquently adding, 'who may be the minister of the Queen is an accident of history; what will remain on that enduring page is the policy pursued and its consequences on her realm.'

The results of the election were not favourable to the Conservative

party. The country remained entranced under the magic spell of Lord Palmerston. Here and there constituencies were to be found which boldly cast aside their allegiance, but the effect of these courageous secessions was neutralised by the action of others who hastened to swell the Palmerstonian ranks. Mr. Gladstone lost his seat for Oxford University, but the city of London returned four Liberals, and Westminster placed at the head of the poll Mr. John Stuart Mill. Mr. Disraeli was returned unopposed for Bucks.; and, in his speech from the hustings at Aylesbury, he took occasion to return to the all-important subject of the union between church and state, showing clearly and forcibly that the existence of a state church, whilst it was compatible with the fullest religious liberty, at the same time provided spiritual instruction for all the subjects of the Queen, 'thus combining, as it were, toleration and orthodoxy, and giving to our institutions the consecrating character of religious connection.' Discussing in the same speech Mr. Gladstone's financing, he gave an amusing account of the way in which that right hon. gentleman had dealt with the Terminable Annuities. He said it was a remarkable thing what Mr. Gladstone did with them. 'It was,' he continued, 'a most wonderful thing. Parliament was assembled, the House was very full, as it always is when Mr. Gladstone is going to make a great speech or to perform some considerable feat. We knew that he was going to perform some considerable feat that night. He had £2,200,000 of taxation which was dying a natural death. It was a fund to which Englishmen had been looking for relief. Well, what did Mr. Gladstone do? It was a feat of legerdemain which exceeded any conjury of M. Robert. He took one million and turned it into ducks, then he took another million and turned it into drakes, and for half an hour these ducks and drakes flew cackling about the House of Commons, until at last we got ashamed of one another, and we ordered strangers to withdraw, and determined to keep it a profound secret until parliament was dissolved.'

When the new Parliament met in February, 1866, it did so under the premiership of Lord John Russell. To the great grief of the

country Lord Palmerston had died in the preceding October, and Mr. Disraeli, on the assembling of the House, made a most touching allusion to the loss of that eminent statesman. He referred to the emotion which they all must feel, and those especially who had been members of the House during three reigns, on the disappearance of one connected so intimately with the history of the country. 'But,' he added, 'the influence over our debates will not soon cease of his genial experience and his moderating wisdom.' One of the first subjects to which the ministry devoted their attention was that of reform. Mr. Gladstone introduced the government measure, and a memorable debate followed—memorable not only for the ability which characterised it, but for the defection of Mr. Lowe and other prominent Liberals, who entered what Mr. Bright described as the 'Cave of Adullam.' The occupants of the 'cave' objected strongly to the indiscriminate lowering of the franchise, as calculated to introduce a preponderance of the lower class element, while Mr. Disraeli now, as in his earlier years, careful to preserve the *balance* of the constitution, wished the working classes to have an adequate, but not an overwhelming, share in the government of the country. The second reading was carried, but only by a majority of five. In a few days the ministerial majority dwindled away altogether, and an amendment being carried against the government by a majority of eleven, ministers resigned, and a Conservative ministry, with Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli at its head, was installed in office.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A REFORM BILL PASSED.

Lord Derby acknowledged that it was a great experiment, and that they had taken a leap in the dark, but expressed confidence in the sound sense of his countrymen.—*Molesworth.*

THE incidents of the last chapter belong mainly to the years 1864–6. And before proceeding to notice those matters of church legislation which in 1867–8 were initiated by Mr. Gladstone, we must not omit to refer to the strenuous, and in great part successful, efforts which Mr. Disraeli made, while in office in 1867, to correct and develop the reforms in the representation of the people which had been left by his Liberal predecessors so unsatisfactory, because so imperfect. The reforms having been begun, and having excited a large amount of popular feeling and passion, as evidenced by the turbulent 'demonstrations' which were held in Hyde Park and elsewhere, it was not desirable to leave the matter in an unfinished and defective state. It fell, therefore, to Mr. Disraeli's lot to introduce a bill in the Lower House, as a government measure, and one which, it was to be taken for granted, had the entire concurrence of the whole cabinet. In doing this Mr. Disraeli made a remarkable speech,—all the more remarkable, too, from the subject of it being an unusual one for a Conservative minister to be called upon to deal with. But reform had clearly become a matter of ministerial necessity, though it was found quite possible to dispose of it judiciously in a constitutional and a Conservative spirit. Lord Derby, as the reader will remember, was no novice in the matter of parliamentary reform. The Reform Bill of 1832, as was generally understood at the time, owed many of its least objectionable provisions to his suggestions; and no one, probably, was more sensible than he had become of the need of amendments, not only to remove

its defects, but to adapt it to the altered political circumstances of the age. There was, moreover, this consideration to be taken into account,—*it had to be done*, and the Liberal ministry had failed in its attempt to do it. To the Conservative ministry it had been bequeathed; and it was fortunate, perhaps, that it was so, since there was all the better chance of the object being accomplished constitutionally and safely.

In introducing the ministerial measure in the Commons, Mr. Disraeli prudently declared that the object in view was not only to maintain, but to strengthen the character and functions of that House. 'They are peculiar,' he observed, 'in any popular assembly; not only rare, but perhaps unexampled, in any other that has existed. The House of Commons,' he continued, 'has combined national representation with the attributes of a senate. That peculiar union has, in our opinion, been owing to the variety of elements of which it is formed. Its variety of character has given to it its deliberative power, and it owes to its deliberative power its general authority. We wish, I repeat, not only to maintain, but to strengthen, that character and those functions; and we believe that, in the present and under the existing circumstances of the country, the best way to do so is to establish them on a broad popular basis. I know that there are some persons in whose minds the epithet which I have just used may create a feeling of distrust; but I attribute the sentiment of alarm which is associated with it to a misapprehension of its meaning, and to that perplexity of ideas which too often confounds popular privileges with democratic rights. They are not identical—they are not similar; more than that, they are contrary. Popular privileges are consistent with a state of society in which there is great inequality of condition. Democratic rights, on the contrary, demand that there should be equality of condition as the fundamental basis of the society which they regulate.' The remarkable sagacity of these remarks, and their aptitude and seasonableness as applied to the object in view, cannot fail to strike with peculiar force anyone who remembers the state of the case on this very

question of parliamentary reform in former times, and the great excitement, nay, the alarming commotion that prevailed throughout the kingdom when the Reform Bill of 1832 was brought forward by the Liberal ministry of that day. And why? Why, but for the very reason which Mr. Disraeli so well explains. The hands in which the question was placed, together with the partizanship of those hands with advanced Radicals and extreme men generally, not unreasonably created a strong feeling of distrust in a very considerable portion—and that the most influential portion—of the public mind of the country. The epithet of 'broad and popular basis' could scarcely fail, indeed, to create a feeling of distrust, since so large a proportion of those who clamoured most loudly for parliamentary reform were the very persons who confounded the most readily and the most mischievously 'popular privileges with democratic rights.' And no greater political truism was ever uttered by political speaker, whether in or out of parliament, than that which Mr. Disraeli uttered when he explained, that while 'popular privileges are consistent with a state of society in which there is great inequality of condition,'—the very state of society which, in the providence of God, has been wisely ordained for mankind in a state of social civilization and intellectual progress, — 'democratic rights, on the contrary, demand that there should be equality of condition as the fundamental basis of the society which they regulate.' And it is this coveted 'equality of condition' which, if not the object, is the tendency, of the popular reforming Radicalism of the day, the motto of which might most truly be that which the French Revolutionists so proudly, yet so madly, emblazoned on their banners—the motto of 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity;' and the practical results of which, as the pages of modern French history so painfully record, have been a prevalence of anarchy, along with deeds of despotism, and scenes of slaughter, which it makes one tremble to think of.

The conclusion, therefore, is irresistible, that of all reforms, parliamentary reform is safest and best in Conservative hands. This, no doubt, was Mr. Disraeli's conviction; and it was his excuse, if

not his justification, for venturing to bring in another Reform Bill, rather than leave the popular clamour for it to be satisfied by a less constitutional, and probably less scrupulous ministry.

There were obstructions, however, thrown in the way, from his own party, and from his own colleagues, which made Mr. Disraeli's task one of no ordinary difficulty. There might probably be reason in them, and they might also be justifiable—in principle, at least, though scarcely, perhaps, as a question of policy, or on grounds of expediency. There are cases, unfortunately, in these critical times, in which even a Conservative ministry finds it impracticable to carry on the business of the government without some concessions to public clamour which, strictly speaking, are not in accord with its Conservative principles. This is one of the unhappy consequences of the 'reforms' already accomplished: those consequences which so strongly substantiate the apprehensions of the Duke of Wellington when, with reference to the first Parliamentary Reform Bill—in 1832—he so anxiously asked: How, under its practical operation upon the parliamentary constituencies, 'the King's government was to be carried on?' It came to pass that the King's government could not be carried on without still further reforms in parliament; that is to say, that no ministry could carry it on by reason of the altered character which that bill gave to the House of Commons through the transformed parliamentary constituencies of the kingdom, without still further developments of those democratic principles which 'reform' had already introduced into them. And the consideration on Mr. Disraeli's part was evidently this,—that since further 'reforms' in the same direction had become unavoidable, whether it would not be better they should be taken in hand by a ministry such as that of which he was now so prominent a member, rather than be left to be dealt with by a party whose Liberalism would inevitably make bad worse instead of better.

There are some remarks in Mr. Disraeli's clever novel of 'Sybil' —more than five-and-twenty years before—which, though not given ostensibly as his own sentiments, were doubtless really such, on the

effects of parliamentary reform, even at that time, on the character of the House of Commons; such, that is, as those of an individual and independent, as well as intelligent mind, though as yet inexperienced in official life, and not very intimately, perhaps, acquainted with parliamentary exigencies or expediencies. They are so reflective, however, possess so much truth, and have so close an interest in connection with the circumstances of their author's political necessities at this time, as a minister of the crown, that we may be excused for here alluding to them. 'The Reform Act (of 1832) may have exercised on the country at large a beneficial influence. Has it? Who will pretend it? But the indirect influence of the Reform Act has been not inconsiderable, and may eventually lead to vast consequences. It set men a thinking; it enlarged the horizon of public experience; it led the public mind to ponder somewhat on the circumstances of our national history; to pry into the beginnings of some social anomalies, which they found were not as ancient as they were led to believe, and which had their origin in causes very different from what they had been educated to credit; and insensibly it created and prepared a popular intelligence to which one can appeal, no longer hopelessly, in any attempt to dispel the mysteries with which, for nearly three centuries, it has been the labour of party writers to involve a national history, and without the dispersion of which no political position can be understood, and no social evil remedied.'

Such, as his own writings show, were some of the thoughts on parliamentary reform that floated in Mr. Disraeli's mind thirty or forty years ago, when he was pursuing his early education as a statesman, and ere he had obtained any experience of official life. And there was much reason in them, and a great deal of common sense in what they concerned, as well as what they reflected. But their practical consideration had come to have quite a different aspect when legislation respecting them was to be adopted—the public mind to be consulted—the responsibilities of office to be regarded—and success, under such circumstances, to be calculated with the view of being achieved. Reform in parliament had perverted the judgment

of too considerable a portion of the public to be found an easy task for the statesmen of either of the two great political parties, but more particularly for the party which sought to preserve and maintain intact the monarchical institutions of the country. And it was to this party, let it not be forgotten, that Mr. Disraeli belonged, while yet, as a minister of the crown, he felt it impossible to avoid further legislation on the subject, as well to satisfy in some measure a *numerical* majority of the commonalty of the realm as to adjust and remove acknowledged defects in the reforms that had already been accomplished, under those Liberal auspices which Conservatism had (not altogether unsuccessfully) striven to check and to control. Not that he was one who, like too many of his Liberal contemporaries, was ever ready, for the sake of mere popularity, to become the slave of public opinion, either on parliamentary reform or any other question. It was in one of his latest speeches, as we have previously shown, that he thus forcibly apostrophised that public *passion* which is too generally dignified with the higher title of sedate and sober *opinion:* 'Who will define public opinion? Any human conclusion that is arrived at with adequate knowledge and with sufficient thought is entitled to respect, and the public opinion of a great nation under such conditions is irresistible, and ought to be so. But what we are too apt to call public opinion is generally nothing more than public sentiment'—meaning thereby mere notion, often vague idea, and sometimes the crudest crotchet or conceit. And no doubt there is great point in the remark of an old philosopher, and in the question he hinges on it, when he says, — 'In all discontents, divisions, and party disputes, we acknowledge no other tribunal but the public. And pray what is the public to do for you?'—more especially when that public is agitated and inebriated, as is so generally the case when democratic principles and plausibilities are the staple material of the violent political tirades addressed to it.

On this occasion, the necessity which a Conservative government could not resist of further 'reforming'—that is, extending—the representation of the people, was undoubtedly an issue of such political

agitation. Lord Derby, able and experienced statesman as he was, and the Prime Minister at the time, could not resist it, any more than Mr. Disraeli himself,—although their yielding to it, as Lord Derby acknowledged, was to take 'a leap in the dark,' the result of which they could not foresee. The Cabinet, however, were not unanimous. There were three dissentients from the project of reform which Lord Derby, with the co-operation of Mr. Disraeli, had proposed: not that they altogether objected to any further enlargement of the constituencies, but principally, if not solely, to the extent of such enlargement. The first proposal was to proceed by resolutions; and Mr. Disraeli gave formal notice in the House of Commons, in a long and argumentative speech, on the 25th of February, of his intention to move such resolutions. But the resignation of the dissentient ministers—who were Lord Cranborne (since Lord Salisbury) and General Peel, in the Commons, and Lord Carnarvon in the Lords—and the objections of the opposition, constrained ministers to abandon that mode of procedure. Mr. Disraeli explained the leading features of the measure for which the resolutions were to prepare the way, and he was met by objections of two totally opposite descriptions—the discontented of his own party demurring to the proposed franchise being fixed so low, and the opposition, on the other hand, objecting that it was not low enough. 'I trust that the House will candidly consider,' Mr. Disraeli wound up by saying, 'the observations I have made. It will be my duty, on the passing of the resolutions, to introduce a bill, and I think that its provisions are such as will, on the whole, satisfy public opinion and the requirements of the case. It will add something like one-third to the constituency, and cause a considerable addition to the number of voters belonging to the working classes. I hope, therefore, it will be fairly considered that they have resumed their ancient position in the parliamentary scheme of this country. At any rate, Her Majesty's Government have brought forward—I will not call it an honest bill, because that epithet has been used so often of late that it might lead to angry recrimination—but they have brought forward

a sincere bill, which they are prepared to carry. Moderate it may be in spirit, but essentially practical, and which I earnestly hope will be backed by the good feeling of an united people.' All this was very conciliatory, but it was in a great measure all in vain. The Liberal party were jealous of a Conservative ministry for taking the question of parliamentary reform out of their hands, claiming, as they most unreasonably and factiously did, a sort of patent-right to its exclusive adoption. And they were only too glad to find that there were difficulties in the way amongst the Conservatives themselves with which, with a little factiousness and a little *finesse*, it would be quite possible to strengthen their hands so as to thwart and endanger the Conservative government.

Within a week of Mr. Disraeli's speech giving notice of his resolutions, the formal and final retirement of the three dissentient ministers had taken place; and the time, therefore, had come for ministerial explanations, which threw a much clearer light than parliament had yet had of the ministerial proceedings, and a light, too, that conveyed a justification of the part Mr. Disraeli had taken therein, which went a long way in setting him and his faithful colleagues right, not only with the rank and file of his own party, but with the great body of the people. His statement of the changes in the cabinet that were resulting from these unhappy dissensions was made to the House of Commons on the 4th of March. 'It has been said that I was hardly justified,' Mr. Disraeli observed, 'when I announced yesterday the secession of three of our colleagues, in stating that secession to have taken place in consequence of the majority of the cabinet having arrived at a decision in favour of our original policy, because no original policy had been intimated to the House. Now I think that criticism is not accurate,—not just. On the 25th of last month, on intimating to the House the measures which a united cabinet were prepared to recommend to parliament, I most distinctly adverted to other propositions which it had been our wish to bring forward, but which we had not felt authorized in making. ('Hear, hear,' from Mr. Gladstone.) I am glad the right hon.

gentleman opposite admits the accuracy of that observation. I distinctly stated on that occasion that there were other measures which would have enabled us to deal with the borough franchise on a more extensive scale, but which we had felt ourselves obliged to relinquish. Well, sir, in bringing forward this measure, which I did on the 25th of February, I hope to satisfy the House that we were not influenced by any thoughtless spirit, and that in the course which we took we were impelled only by those principles which ought to influence public men in the circumstances in which we were placed. There is no foundation for the charge that has been brought against the government that they neglected for a long period the consideration of the important subject which now so much engrosses the attention of parliament, and that it has been taken up by us without sufficient thought, with indifference, and after a delay, characterised probably by negligence. Now, sir, I say there is no foundation for that charge. Early in the autumn Lord Derby wrote to me, and told me that, after grave deliberation, he had arrived at the conclusion that it was absolutely necessary to deal with the question of parliamentary reform, and that it must be dealt with in no niggard spirit. That communication was made to me by Lord Derby, I repeat, early last autumn, and he requested me to give my best attention to the subject. Sir, I do not say that Lord Derby, charged with the responsibility of state affairs, and anxious, if possible, to bring to a happy solution one of the most difficult problems of modern politics,—I do not say the feeling, or even the conduct, of Lord Derby in the interval between the time when he made that communication to me and the first meeting of the cabinet was not modified, as the conduct of every public man must be modified by the circumstances of the time, by the temper of the nation, by observation of general or particular opinions, by acquaintance with the obstacles which he might have to encounter, and the various combinations which it would be necessary to enter into to attain the end which he desired. He must, indeed, be constituted differently from other statesmen if his course were not modified, sometimes

even arrested, by such circumstances. But this I will say of Lord Derby: that what was his first opinion, early in the autumn, is his last opinion, and it is one upon which he is prepared to act. Sir, we had more than the hope, we had the expectation, that we should have been able to propose to the House a measure conceived in the spirit which had influenced Lord Derby when he made that communication to me in the autumn, and sanctioned and supported by all his colleagues. After having entertained, however, the expectation of that character, we were, I must say, unexpectedly disappointed in that hope. Now, I impugn no man's conduct under these circumstances. I am confident, for my own part, that every member of the cabinet of Lord Derby, whatever his opinion on the subject, or whatever the course he may have taken, acted only in duty and in honour. That, however, being called upon somewhat unexpectedly to arrive at a decision, and feeling that he had entered into an engagement with his sovereign and his country to bring this question, if possible, to a solution, Lord Derby sanctioned the measure which on the 25th of last month I brought before the House. Upon that measure I shall make one remark. The House must not think that because we were not able to carry into effect the more considerable measure which we had planned, that we had recourse to a scheme which we had only suddenly adopted;'—and he then proceeds to show that it had for some time engaged the thoughtful attention both of Lord Derby and himself, though he (Mr. Disraeli) would have preferred a somewhat different measure.

All this is now a thing of the past: we need not here, therefore, go into any detail of either one measure or the other. Suffice it to say that both sought to considerably lower and extend the franchise, and therefore enlarge and diversify the constituencies; whilst the Bill which Mr. Disraeli described on the 25th of February was, to give his own words, founded on this principle,—'it sought to restore, and would have restored, the labouring classes to that place in our parliamentary system which they forfeited by the Act of 1832.' It was mainly in this connection that the three members of the cabinet

who resigned had founded their dissent. They feared—and we must say not altogether without reason—that the democratic element that would thus be introduced must swamp the new constituency—for the measure would do far more than 'restore the labouring classes to that place in our parliamentary system which they had forfeited,' and forfeited at the hands of Liberals, not Conservatives.

This, we say, it was that lost the administration three of its safest, if not its ablest members—a loss of which Mr. Disraeli thus earnestly and grievously expressed his regret:—'I know there are many in this House who think that the circumstance of losing colleagues, although it may be a disagreeable incident, is one which, like many of the casualties of life, must be encountered and endured. Some, indeed, think that the breaking up of a cabinet is like the breaking up of a social meeting, and that these things are easily forgotten and passed over. But I see some right. hon. gentlemen opposite who have had the misfortune of parting with colleagues, and I think they will agree with me that the disruption of that tie —that separation from men with whom you have long been bound by a tie of the most intense interest—that of attempting to manage the affairs of a great country, in the hope that you may be contributing to the public welfare—is one of the most painful and saddest incidents that can occur. I rank it among the calamities of life. If my resignation of office could have prevented that unfortunate result, that resignation was at the command of my noble friend. It was at his command then, as it has always been. And whether I have sat on that side or on this, those who know me know that I have always said that no personal sacrifice on my part should I hesitate to make to maintain a united party or a united cabinet. But the state of affairs would not have been bettered by my retiring from office. We lost colleagues with whom it was a pride and pleasure to act; and my own consolation under the circumstances is, that I feel certain the services of such men, whatever may become of my humbler self, will not be lost to the country. And there is one among them whose commanding talents, whose clear intelligence, capacity

for labour, and power of expression will always, I am sure, qualify him for taking a leading part in the affairs of this country,'—meaning, we need scarcely say, Lord Cranborne, now the Marquis of Salisbury.

There is a genial and generous spirit in these allusions to men who, by seceding from the cabinet at so critical a moment, and becoming opponents upon one of the most perplexing questions with which that cabinet could have been called upon to deal, must have been inflicting upon their deserted colleagues great mortification—upon Mr. Disraeli himself in particular,—as well as deranging some of its most important and most difficult designs, as a Conservative ministry. It is not often, now-a-days,—if it ever was—that we find such generosity mingling with the anger and animosity of political disputes, and discords, and contentions. In this instance, too, it presented itself as

> 'A generous virtue of a vigorous kind,
> Strong in the last recesses of the mind.'

Otherwise it must surely have been quenched, for there was only too much to extinguish it had its expression been weak or superficial. As respects the one individual, moreover, to whom it was most strongly evinced, it had a touch of magnanimity in its display that enhanced the virtue of it in no slight degree. For not only was he the foremost but the most formidable of the three dissentients, if not also the one who was especially severe in his denunciations, as well as his argumentations, both of the scheme of parliamentary reform itself, and of him who, in particular, recommended it so earnestly to parliament. 'Our theory of government,' said that now more than ever eminent statesman, in wrathful reproach of the colleagues he had forsaken, with special reference to Mr. Disraeli as their leader in the House of Commons; 'our theory of government is not that a certain number of statesmen should place themselves in office to do whatever the lower House of Parliament bids them. No; our theory of government is, that on each side of the House there should be men supporting definite opinions, and that what they have supported in opposition they should adhere to in office; and that every one

should know, from the fact of their being in office, that these particular opinions will be supported. If you reverse this, and declare that, no matter what a man has supported in opposition, the moment he gets into office it shall be open to him to reverse and repudiate it, you practically destroy the whole basis on which our form of government rests, and you make the House of Commons a mere scrambling place for office. You practically banish all honourable men from the political arena, and you will find, in the long run, that the time will come when your statesmen will be nothing but political adventurers, and the professions of opinion will be looked upon as so many political manœuvres for the purpose of attaining office.' He then goes on to say, 'I entreat you, gentlemen opposite, not to believe that my feelings on this subject are dictated simply by my hostility to this particular measure, though I object to it most strongly. But, even if I took a contrary view—if I deemed it to be most advantageous, I should still deeply regret that the position of the administration should have been so degraded as it has been in the present session: I should deeply regret to find that the House of Commons had applauded a policy of legerdemain; and I should above all things regret that this great gift to the people—if gift you think it—should be purchased at the cost of a political betrayal which has no parallel in our parliamentary annals, which strikes at the root of all that mutual confidence which is the very soul of our party government, and on which alone the strength and freedom of our representative institutions can possibly be sustained.' That the abstract principles of this forcible argument are sound and defensible can admit of no dispute. But there is yet such a thing as political expediency, without which our representative institutions would frequently prove impracticable. Into that consideration, however, it would be out of place to enter here. We have given the invective, and the imputation, and the reproach, simply to show how great, and how rare, was the generosity that could treat its author, as Mr. Disraeli did, so remarkably, so magnanimously, and so independently. Yes, so *rare*, as well as so great. For such is the fact in everyday life, and in political

life more particularly. It has been well observed by an eminent moral philosopher of our country that, 'One great reason why men practise generosity so little in the world is their finding so little there; for generosity is catching, and if many men escape it, it is in a great degree because they meet with no one to give it them.' And it was a virtue in Mr. Disraeli that was characteristic of his nature. 'Confidence in one's self,' we are truly told, 'is the chief nurse of magnanimity.' And it was confidence in himself that was one great secret of Mr. Disraeli's pre-eminence in public life.

Having found it inexpedient, from the unfavourable reception the proposal met with, to proceed with the preliminary resolutions for a measure of reform, ministers determined to bring in a bill at once. And so desirous were they to have it made a measure as satisfactory as possible to the moderate men of both the great political parties —to all, in fact, who sought to strengthen, rather than impair, the monarchical institutions of the country—that, as Mr. Disraeli had declared, the ministry would gladly receive any propositions, offered in a good spirit, that seemed likely to improve it. 'If only,' he said, 'the House deigns to co-operate with us, and come into council with us, suggestions of great value may be made, which would add to the fulness and completeness of the consummation. I can only say,' he added, 'on the part of my colleagues, that those suggestions will be received not only with candour, but, if found to deserve the acceptance of the House, and appear to be for the public advantage, they will be accepted with gratitude.'

Much reconsideration had to be bestowed by the cabinet on the bill which, under many altered circumstances, and many accumulating difficulties, had now to be submitted to parliament. It was not until after the middle of May, 1867—the initiative having been taken in February—that Mr. Disraeli laid before the House of Commons the measure finally agreed upon by the ministry. Its great—in the opinion of its framers, indeed, its essential—feature, was its giving a vote to every *bonâ fide* householder. But to this sweeping concession there were checks, or compensations; and it was these that formed the

subject of most formidable dissension and perplexing controversy. In committee, therefore, it had to undergo various, not to say vital, amendments; for Mr. Disraeli remained true to his promise to receive any propositions to that end with candour, if not with favour, and, if likely to be advantageous, with grateful acceptance. Of course there were party prejudices to be contended against, as well as Radical devices to be resisted; and there was no lack at any time of animated, and sometimes acrimonious controversy. Many points had to be surrendered by the government which, under other and happier circumstances, would never have been consented to by a Conservative cabinet; and, altogether, the bill became a much more democratic measure than ministers intended or wished it to be, or, in fact, than it ought to have been allowed to be. But *necessitas non habet leges.* It was thought to be a matter to be got out of the way; and that of the two evils of keeping it up as a source of angry contention and interminable obstruction, and getting rid of it, even at the sacrifice of some Conservative principle and precaution, the latter was, under all the circumstances, acknowledged to be the best. Such, we believe, was deemed the *necessity;* and one which, being held justifiable, had no *law* to restrain it. The *full* effect of so hazardous a policy still remains to be seen.

A farewell shot at the bill, on its third reading, was fired by Mr. Disraeli's late respected colleague, and familiar friend, Lord Cranborne, with terrible force; though on this occasion he by no means singled out the right hon. gentleman from the rest of the cabinet, but denounced it *en masse*, when he said,—'And this is the end of it! This is the ignominious conclusion,—that Lord Derby's government—the Tory government—the government of those statesmen who prompted and encouraged that steadfast resistance—should in the end have proposed a change far more sweeping and extensive than any man had before submitted to the House of Commons. And of all the strange marvels we have seen in the course of the present session, the one that has been the most strange is, that it should have been denied that these ministers have changed their

opinions!' But it did not follow that, because from what they thought to be political *necessity* they had had to alter their policy, they had changed their opinions. They had yielded—wisely or unwisely—to circumstances beyond their control. They had been obliged—so they thought—to submit to a compulsion they could not overcome. True, they might have followed Lord Cranborne's example, and resigned. But that, they believed, would only be—to use a vulgar yet expressive aphorism—getting 'out of the frying-pan into the fire.' Such, it was understood, was the sum and substance of Mr. Disraeli's, as well as Lord Derby's, apology. It might be a mistake, but it was one, let it be remembered, which Mr. Disraeli shared with a cabinet of as high-minded, conscientious, and experienced Conservative statesmen as any that ever sat in the councils of this kingdom. And although Lord Cranborne has probably seen no occasion to change his opinion of that mistake, he has been so thoroughly satisfied, one cannot but conclude, of his own error in characterising the conduct he opposed and denounced as a 'party betrayal,' or 'political leger-demain,' as apparently to have freely and fully condoned it, under the conviction, when he came calmly and forbearingly to reflect upon it all, that it was pursued under an honest persuasion of its urgent expediency, if not its actual necessity, under the circumstances, —circumstances, too, for which the ministers were not altogether responsible, but the blame of which rested mainly on the factious and unyielding opposition they had to face in parliament, fiercely fighting, as its leaders were, for the places which the Conservative administration with so much difficulty retained, in the highest interests of the kingdom—if a kingdom it was to remain. With respect to Lord Cranborne's condonation of Mr. Disraeli in particular, the fact of his having not very long afterwards become his colleague again as a cabinet minister—served under him as such, Mr. Disraeli having then been called to her Majesty's councils as First Minister of the Crown—not only proves and establishes it beyond all reasonable dispute, but their reconciliation and their reunion were characterised by traits and tokens of personal regard and esteem which must confirm

that conclusion indisputably and thoroughly. And this renewal of their friendship increased and strengthened as their official social intercourse became more intimate, and as they got to know each other better than before. One proof, among many that might be adduced, of Lord Salisbury's respect, not to say affection, for Lord Beaconsfield, is that which has been thus so feelingly related on the highest authority since the death of our great statesman:—'Not long after the dissolution of 1880, and his consequent removal from his official residence in Downing Street, Lord and Lady Salisbury, who were abroad, begged him to go and spend some time at Hatfield, while his arrangements were being made. There is a satisfaction in recollecting,' it is sympathisingly added, 'that his serenity was undisturbed by the frequent arrival of tidings that must have been unwelcome. Cheered by the society of one or two members of the family, and by some of the children, who were his great allies, he was able to enjoy wandering in the glades of the beautiful park.'[1] Incidents such as these are sure signs of warm friendship, and true personal esteem,—undoubted proofs that mutual misunderstandings had passed away; that on both sides had been learnt the lesson 'to forget and forgive;' and that, in a word, the principle of Terence's familiar remark, *Amantium iræ amosis redintegratio est*, had been practically illustrated with as much truth, and as much force, between these two eminent *friends*, as ever it was in the warm reconciliation of *lovers*, to which it is literally meant more especially to apply. Doubtless at Hatfield, in particular, Mr. Disraeli could not fail to be reminded by all around him what a recompense he had, amid all the carking cares and all the petty vexations of his political position, in what the poet so well describes as—

> 'The bosom of a friend,
> Where heart meets heart.'

Whatever may be our opinions of the bill itself, or the policy pursued in carrying it through parliament, we all must agree in

[1] 'Some Personal Recollections of the Later Years of the Earl of Beaconsfield, K.G.' By Lady John Manners.

rejoicing that such a *questio vexata* as the subject of it had become was thus got rid of. Not, it is true, for ever. Yet for a good many years it has been in a great measure laid on the shelf; and the Conservative party, at any rate, is not so far disposed to be troubled with it again. With the Liberals, of course, it is far different; and so it would have been under any circumstances,—and for this plain reason, that a formidable section of their party have ulterior objects in view, and those of a democratic character quite out of keeping with existing institutions, but which can only be accomplished by a far lower and wider extension of the franchise than anything yet enacted. That section will never rest until such extension is effected; and then, although the question of parliamentary reform being exhausted, their agitation for that object will be at an end, there will arise, in all probability, another and still more alarming agitation, and one in the contemplation of which there will be many Liberals even, or we are much mistaken, only too ready to exclaim how much better it would have been to bear the ills they had, rather than fly to others that they knew not of. Warnings to this effect were forcibly, and sometimes solemnly, enunciated in both Houses of Parliament, but with scarcely any avail; for not only was the measure thought to be a popular one, but there were many who did not altogether approve of it that yet did not like to oppose it, under the idea that it would be a greater evil to disappoint the public of what it had set its heart on receiving,—a further large and liberal instalment of political 'liberty,' and through it of parliamentary influence.

In the recess of parliament which ensued, among other demonstrations more or less favourable to the ministerial party was a banquet given to Mr. Disraeli at Edinburgh. Of course it was a thoroughly Conservative affair, and there was everything in it to certify that, in Scotland at least, Mr. Disraeli had lost none of his popularity with the great Conservative party. It was an opportunity of which, no doubt, he was but too glad to avail himself, to supplement what he had said in his place in parliament in explanation and in

apology for apparently the somewhat too extensive and too unguarded enlargement of the elective franchise in the measure of parliamentary reform that had been passed. In doing this, he frankly confessed that he and his colleagues had been influenced in no slight degree by the reluctance they felt to allow the Liberals to have the sole right of dealing with that important question, and described the necessity they had been under of 'educating their party' for the late occasion. This remark was eagerly laid hold of by the Liberal press, and the handle made of it was still more eagerly adopted throughout the Liberal ranks, to assail Mr. Disraeli with egotistic assurance for claiming the personal influence which it was made to appear as implying, in the reports of his speech given in the Liberal newspapers. This was easily, though most unfortunately, done by changing the little monosyllable 'we' into the ordinary symbol of egotism, *I*. It was a simple process of mutation, yet was it one that made all the difference in the world as to the character and complexion of what was asserted. What Mr. Disraeli actually did say, as was afterwards made manifest in an authorised report of the speech, was this,—'We had to prepare the mind of the country—to educate it, if it be not arrogant to use such a phrase—to educate our party on this subject of reform. It is a large party, and its attention can only be obtained to the consideration of a great question by the pressure which is secured by frequent discussion.' To use *I* instead of *we*—to make it appear he had boasted that *he alone* had 'educated our party,' and this so successfully as to gain that party's support to a measure of parliamentary reform which was opposed to so many of its inherent principles, and so much of its invariable policy—would certainly have been an assumption and a conceit by no means calculated to maintain Mr. Disraeli's high reputation as the distinguished statesman he had, through his own undoubted merits, become. That Mr. Disraeli sagaciously realised this, and felt as a naturally modest man chagrined at being made to appear arrogantly conceited and egotistical, is evidenced by the care he took to prevent any misunderstanding on the part of the

public of the general tenour and meaning of his remarks. Lord John Russell having in the House of Lords stated that it was Mr. Disraeli's boast at Edinburgh 'that whilst during seven years he opposed a reduction of the borough franchise, he had been all that time educating his party with the view of bringing about a much greater reduction of the franchise than that which his opponents had proposed,' Mr. Disraeli at once took the trouble of writing to the London papers to declare that the noble lord's charge had no foundation, nothing of the kind having been said by him at Edinburgh. 'I said there,' he observes, 'that the Tory party, after the failure of their bill of 1859, had been educated for seven years on the subject of parliamentary reform, and during that interval had arrived at five conclusions, which, with their authority, I had at various times announced, viz.: (1) That the measure should be complete; (2) That the representation of no place should be entirely abrogated; (3) That there must be a real boundary commission; (4) That the county representation should be considerably increased; (5) That the borough franchise should be established on the principle of rating. This is what I said at Edinburgh, and it is true.'

In addition to thus setting himself right with the public on a point of great importance and some delicacy, Mr. Disraeli did his best to allay the fears of those members of the Conservative party who felt that 'the leap in the dark' might have serious results. In a speech at the Mansion House he contended that when the hubbub had subsided it would be found that the Tory party had but resumed its natural functions in the government of the country. The monopoly of Liberalism had been broken down, and whilst they had destroyed this monopoly they had been careful to strengthen the institutions of the country—institutions which the Tory party were determined to maintain in their integrity, because they believed them to be essential to the well being of the nation, seeing that they 'represented the interests and guarded the rights of the people.'

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE IRISH CHURCH CONTROVERSY.

'A common form of faith binds the Irish Protestants to ourselves, while they, upon the other hand, are fast linked to Ireland, and thus they supply the most natural bond of connection between the two countries. But if England, by overthrowing their church, should weaken their moral position, they would be no longer able, perhaps no longer willing, to counteract the desires of the majority, tending, under the direction of their leaders, to what is termed national independence.'—*Gladstone in 1840.*

WE now come to a period in Mr. Disraeli's eventful career in which there was suddenly and signally consummated much for which recent events in his ministerial and parliamentary proceedings had evidently and surely been paving the way. Scarcely had the next session of parliament been opened when alarming accounts were published of the illness of the Premier, Lord Derby, who was quite unable to appear in his place in the Upper House; and not many days afterwards, so serious had the noble lord's condition become, that he deemed it expedient to tender his resignation, which her Majesty, under the painful circumstances, had no alternative but to accept. In his letter to the Queen communicating his desires, Lord Derby advised her Majesty to offer the responsible office he had filled to Mr. Disraeli, and her Majesty therefore lost no time in sending for the right hon. gentleman, and appointing him to the premiership. He kissed hands on his acceptance of the importaat charge on the 27th of February (1868), and two days afterwards he made the first and only changes of much consequence in the ministry to which he had succeeded, by appointing Lord Cairns Lord Chancellor, in the place of Lord Chelmsford, and Mr. Ward Hunt Chancellor of the Exchequer, in succession to himself,—he (Mr. Disraeli) continuing in the leadership of the House of Commons.

An interesting and rather remarkable incident occurred in the initiatory proceeding of Mr. Disraeli's elevation to the high office

of first minister of the crown. The communication of her Majesty's command to him to wait upon her, for the purpose of receiving the gracious intention of his sovereign, was conveyed to the right hon. gentleman by General Grey, at that time holding the confidential office of Secretary to the Queen; and this General Grey was the same gentleman who had been Mr. Disraeli's successful competitor for the representation of High Wycombe in parliament, when, in his youthful days, he was struggling with so many adverse circumstances in his endeavour to obtain a seat in the House of Commons. General (at that time Colonel) Grey enjoyed a signal triumph over Mr. Disraeli, and delayed his setting out on that distinguished parliamentary career which at length so honourably gained him what was doubtless the object of his highest ambition. But it was *his* turn to be triumphant now. Which of the triumphs—so many years apart as they were—was the greatest and most glorious, it is quite unnecessary to inquire. Their respective feelings must on this occasion have been as contrary as their relative triumphs were dissimilar—although we are far from supposing that General Grey was insensible to the gratification which every noble mind must experience at being the medium of communicating, even to a political opponent, his selection by the sovereign for so distinguished an honour as that which Mr. Disraeli was thought worthy to receive,—an honour he had done so much to deserve, and of which he was so well entitled to say,

'Tis to myself I owe this just reward.'

Within a week after the interesting formalities we have been alluding to, Mr. Disraeli took his seat in the House of Commons as Premier, and in so doing was greeted with an outburst of hearty applause which was by no means confined to the ministerial benches. When the cheering had subsided, he spoke thus modestly and explicitly on the events which had occurred:—

'I may be allowed to say a few words on the changes which the retirement of Lord Derby from the chief conduct of affairs has occasioned. That retirement was unexpected; for his colleagues were most unwilling to sever their connection with a leader of so much ability and experience. I have no language in which I can

express my sentiments, and I will not be tempted to dwell or enter on the character of Lord Derby. I hope and believe that he will be restored to health, and long enjoy the position which his rank and eloquence must always command in this country. Her Majesty having been graciously pleased to entrust me with the office of First Lord of the Treasury, although I know that under any circumstances such a trust must be one of great burthen and difficulty—and especially in my case, from peculiar and personal reasons—I did not think that I could with self-respect decline the gracious offer. I trusted that I should be supported by my colleagues; I trusted in the sympathy of a great and generous party; and I trusted in an impartial treatment from the House in which I have passed half of my existence. (Cheers.) Under those circumstances I presumed to accept Her Majesty's gracious trust, and I am bound in gratitude to express my deep sentiments on the generous manner in which my colleagues have given me their assistance; and I feel sure that my trust, both in the confidence of a great party and the impartial treatment of the House, will not be disappointed. It is customary on occasions like the present to make some exposition of the views and policy of the government; but there has now been no change of government, and we have not now recently acceded to power; we shall pursue the policy which was laid down by Lord Derby two years ago. With respect to foreign affairs, the conduct of my noble friend has gained the approbation of parliament and the confidence of the public. Our policy is a policy of peace, but not of peace at any price. We do not believe that peace is to be secured by a policy of isolation, but by a policy of generous sympathy and regard, not only for our own interests, but the interests of other nations. Such a policy will maintain the influence and dignity of England, based upon esteem and respect. (Cheers.) With regard to domestic affairs, our policy will be a liberal policy (cheers and laughter): a truly liberal policy (cheers), which will not shrink from the progress required by the age, and will recognise those elements of our national character which are the best security for our national institutions.' (Cheers.)

After a brief reference to Ireland, Mr. Disraeli resumed his seat amidst general cheering.

The whole House were evidently proud of him, as well they might be: proud of him for having, amidst so many difficulties and discouragements, achieved by his own exertions so high a position among them; though, at the same time, those who formed the opposition which he had to face soon began to show that, with all their pride for him in having attained successfully the honourable post he now filled, they were not disposed to yield one jot or tittle in their persistent endeavours to derogate and to displace him.

The first and greatest question to be brought before the House of Commons related, as was foretold, to Ireland; and to Ireland, as

concerning the peace and prosperity of its people, to a far greater extent, and through quite other influences, than they who were agitating it appeared to have any true idea of; and this because it involved the interests of that which one of her own distinguished countrymen of a former age so well described as forming 'the basis of civil society, and the source of all good and of all comfort.'

To the scenes and circumstances of that part of Mr. Disraeli's parliamentary career we have now to enter upon, the last chapter but one preceding this will be found to have been no unsuitable introduction, from his having now to stand forth courageously and faithfully as the unflinching defender of the Irish Church, against one who had previously committed himself to its defence much more decidedly, and much more solemnly, than Mr. Disraeli had ever done; and this, not in the heat of debate, or in the interests of party, but calmly, deliberately, in the sacred privacy of his closet, and with that cautious and circumspect consideration which belongs to the *littera scripta* of one who, as he undoubtedly gave every sign of being, was thoroughly in earnest—or, at any rate, heartily wished to be thought so. Yes; all this was put on record in that 'written letter' *which remains.* Spoken words may pass away and be forgotten, as so many of Mr. Gladstone's words, having served their purpose, will be; but those committed to writing, printed and published, will still *remain* as evidence that can neither be disputed nor denied. The written expression, too, in this case, had a solemnity that gave to it a tone of peculiar seriousness, and a force of apparent truth, of no ordinary weight and significance.

The grave responsibility which Mr. Gladstone had described as being involved in any assault on the Irish Church he now declared his intention to disregard, thereby securing the indispensable support of those who sought the overthrow of all such established institutions, not in Ireland only, but eventually in England and in Scotland also. And upon Mr. Disraeli, therefore, had fallen the duty of leading the van of that valiant host which bravely and faithfully stood forth to discharge Mr. Gladstone's 'high and glorious, though arduous

duty.' As may naturally be supposed, the reasons which induced the attack upon the Irish Church, an attack which has been utterly barren of beneficial results, were eagerly asked for by the church's defenders. It happened that in 1865, in a letter to Dr. Hannah, Mr. Gladstone had described the question as being 'apparently remote,' as 'lying at a distance I cannot measure,' and as 'out of all bearing on the politics of the day.' Three years did not elapse after these words were penned ere Mr. Gladstone introduced it as a 'burning question which must be settled.' Why this sudden change of opinion? What had brought this remote question so rapidly to the front? A venerable archdeacon declared, 'It is for social and political reasons. Ireland is a country more than commonly full of strife and trouble, poverty and discontent. Nothing that has been done or attempted to be done seems to meet the case. Now, therefore, the old Liberal policy is invoked, and it is, *Fiat experimentum in ecclesia*, Let us see what can be done with the church.'

The *Saturday Review* remarked with its usual smartness, 'What Ireland is now, and what its crisis is, it was twelve months ago; Fenianism, everybody admits, does not constitute the difference. Mr. Gladstone does not venture to say that in Fenianism is to be found a sufficient cause for the difference between the Gladstone of 1865 and the Gladstone of 1868. The Irish Establishment has not grown weaker, or more insolent, or more delinquent, or more of an absurdity, or a sham, or an injustice, than it was. The difference of the eras, as rightly calculated between 697 years and 700 years, may be omitted in the calculation. But there is a difference. The whole of the rope is paid out. It must either snap now at once and for ever, or we must splice it. Very likely; we are not denying it, only we should like to know why. Only give us a decent pretext, and even a compromise of an argument for closing with the disestablishment of the Irish Church, and we may be satisfied. But Mr. Gladstone offers none. He will not so much as condescend to perceive or even to admit the possibility of a difficulty arising from the disestablishment. Perhaps, like other hasty sanitary reformers, he will drain the lake

only because it is weedy and muddy, utterly careless of the fever and pestilence which may come of it; or, with one of our political teachers, he may say that it is better to throw the value of the church into the Atlantic rather than keep it up. But such considerations are above or below Mr. Gladstone. He is only resolved on one course. He will move an abstract resolution, that opprobrium and disgrace of statesmanship; and the only justification of his policy is that it is his policy. As things stand, and in the absence of a better estimate of Mr. Gladstone's new lights, cynics will find it in the fact that he is not in office. The justification is really not a bad one; anyhow it is better than none at all. But it may just as well be acknowledged.' It is only fair, however, and may not be out of place at this juncture, to notice some of the reasons which the Liberals assigned for the measure. Mr. Gladstone described his work as a 'work of peace and justice,' and an effort 'to fill up with the cement of human concord the noble fabric of the British Empire.' Earl Russell, presiding at a meeting at St. James' Hall, said the object of it was to produce contentment in Ireland. 'He was confident that Mr. Gladstone would lead them on to victory, and so institute an era of *permanent peace* between England and Ireland.' What a fearfully inaccurate and unfounded prophecy!

When the subject was about to be formally brought before the House of Commons, there was a preliminary skirmish of rather a singular character. Mr. Disraeli, it was imputed, had, some *five-and-twenty years* or so before, in a speech in that House respecting the Irish Church, said something which was tortured into implying that *he*, too, was not indisposed to deal despoilingly with the Established Church in Ireland. And foremost among those, his assailants, who stood up to charge him with inconsistency and something worse, was, strange to say, none other than Mr. Gladstone himself, when moving his resolution on the 3rd of April, 1868,—that the House should go into committee on the Irish Church, to consider his proposition for its disestablishment and disendowment. Referring to a speech of Mr. Disraeli's in 1844 on the state of Ireland, in which

it was said to be 'an evil' to have the Irish Church regarded by its Romish opponents as 'an alien church;' he contended that what it meant was, in one word, 'destruction.' Mr. Disraeli, however, had already vindicated himself with respect to that speech. A week or two before, in answer to some allusion to it, he had taken occasion to say in his place in the House,—'With regard to the passage from that speech, there are many remarks which, if I wanted to vindicate or defend myself, I might legitimately make. But I do not care to say it, and I do not wish to say it, because, in my conscience, I believe the actual sentiment of that speech which I meant to convey on the whole was right. It may have been expressed with the heedless rhetoric which I suppose is the appanage of all who sit below the gangway; but in my historical conscience the real sentiment of that speech was right.' It did not by any means follow, however, that, by its sentiment being *right*, it committed Mr. Disraeli to Mr. Gladstone's 'one word, *destruction*.' It was *right* in deploring that it unfortunately happened that so large a proportion of the Irish people should be taught by their priests to hate, to decry, and to denounce the Established Church. It was natural and reasonable, because it was unhappily felt to be but too true, to call such a state of things 'an evil.' But surely it could neither be reasonable nor fair to suspect, or to infer, and take for granted, that Mr. Disraeli thereby meant to imply that he was in favour of the 'destruction' of the Irish Church.

A speech delivered five-and-twenty years before, under very different circumstances from those of the period when it was so unwisely and so rashly determined to assail the Established Church in Ireland, —although that speech might contain a remark capable, by a little distortion, or other ingenuity, of being made *to seem* favourable to putting down, though certainly not to plundering, the church as an established church,—this could be no fair evidence, in such a case, of that with which Mr. Disraeli was accused. If past speeches were to be brought forward at all, why not, at the same time, adduce one of Mr. Disraeli's only a little short of five-and-twenty years old, in which he said thus plainly and unambiguously: 'I hold it to be

a Conservative principle that we maintain the church in Ireland, believing that maintenance perfectly reconcilable with the rights and privileges of all classes of her Majesty's subjects in that kingdom.'

Nothing could more clearly or more strongly confirm the view we have just taken, and justify alike the consistency and the fidelity of Mr. Disraeli on so important a question, than the speech which he delivered in opposing Mr. Gladstone's motion for the House to go into committee to prepare for the introduction of his bill for depriving the Irish Church of its lawful endowments, and of its legitimate constitutional position as a religious establishment of the realm, pledged, tied, and bound to be 'Protestant,'—using the term in the rightful sense of denoting a *protest* against Romanism, whilst yet claiming for the church as being what Mr. Gladstone himself had once acknowledged and proclaimed it to be, 'THE REFORMED CATHOLIC CHURCH OF IRELAND.'

There was a foregone conclusion in Mr. Gladstone's resolution which made it a great farce to submit it to a House of Commons in which he well knew he had a strong party majority at his back. Mr. Disraeli, therefore, appropriately began his speech by exposing it. 'I apprehend,' he emphatically said, 'that I am not in any way misrepresenting his expressions, a thing most foreign from my intention, when I say that the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Gladstone) proposes to terminate the connection between the state and the church, so far as Ireland is concerned, which in neological phrase is styled disestablishment; and that he proposes a policy which, first partially, and in the end completely, would accomplish the disendowment of the church in Ireland. I believe I have correctly expressed what the right hon. gentleman has stated, or rather intimated, and what, if opportunity offered, he would in more detail bring under our consideration.' There could be no doubt that what Mr. Disraeli thus, with almost unnecessary formality, stated was not only quite correct, but was well known to be the case on both sides of the House. But he had to speak as a minister of the crown; and no 'heedless rhetoric,' he felt, would be becoming in such a capacity,

upon such a question. In his case 'we must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us,' was a needful precaution. Thus cautiously and deliberately, therefore, did he, addressing the chair, proceed with his reply:—'Well, sir, this question having been brought before the House and the country somewhat suddenly, the government had to consider what was the proper mode in which to encounter it. They might have moved "the previous question" on the motion for going into committee. This is a course which, upon the same subject, was, I believe, adopted by our predecessors three years ago, and it is a course which is much approved by those who have experience of parliamentary life, when they deal with difficult questions. It might have been prudent three years ago to meet this motion by moving "the previous question;" but I think, myself—considering the circumstances under which the question is now brought forward, not by an isolated and independent member of parliament, but by a party of considerable power, by the leader of the opposition in this House, and under circumstances, as it appears to us, of precipitation, and consequently, being a question which attracts, and even alarms, the public and the House—it would have been unwise in us to have taken refuge in a course at all times ambiguous, and not altogether satisfactory.' This was quite true. But the alternative course proposed was not satisfactory; and subsequent events have shown that it was the adoption of an expedient that was not only evasive, but that contributed to a fatal issue. Mr. Disraeli is believed to have concurred in it reluctantly, but is said to have been overruled in the cabinet by the influence of one who has since deserted the Conservative party, and gone over to the enemy, adopting some of the most democratic of that enemy's principles, and straining every likely effort to aid in accomplishing its objects. That alternative was an amendment proposed by Lord Stanley (now Lord Derby) to the effect that the Irish Church should not be disestablished and disendowed, at any rate until the proposition to do so should be submitted to the decision of a new parliament. Every credit was due to Mr. Disraeli for resisting all idea of disestablishment in

his speech; but the amendment, though he did not propose it, had his concurrence,—his reluctant concurrence, no doubt, and obtained against his will, under circumstances of great difficulty and danger. For it clearly involved an admission that the destruction of the Established Church in Ireland might be, if not within a measurable distance of being effected, yet on the eve of being brought under consideration with a view to its accomplishment,—and this with, virtually, the sanction of Her Majesty's Government. Had the amendment been carried, therefore, the attainment of Mr. Gladstone's object might not have been defeated, but only deferred; and, although kept in abeyance for a while by a new and more Conservative parliament, the question would have acquired a consequence, and a practicability, which must have greatly advanced its approximation to completion.

Lord Cranborne, in the debate, clearly pointed this out, criticising the conduct of the government with respect to reform, and expressing his fears that they meant to play the same part with respect to the Irish Church. He would, he said, sooner attempt to tell how the weathercock would point to-morrow than predict the policy of the head of the government, but such a policy, such a management as this, was unworthy of the House, and the government which ought to lead the House. It was impossible to tell under which thimble the pea would be found, for the noble lord who moved the amendment scrupulously avoided laying down any policy or principle of his own. . . . He could not reconcile the amendment with the letter of the Prime Minister.[1] If the government meant to betray the Irish Church, the amendment was clever; but if they meant to act up to the letter, it was a weak and fatal policy. Such tactics were not only dishonourable, but impolitic; for it was futile to entrench themselves behind vague and ambiguous utterances which had a double purpose to serve. He could never support such an amendment, and would much rather

[1] Mr. Disraeli had written a letter to Lord Dartmouth, in which he had said, 'We have heard something lately of the crisis in Ireland. In my opinion the crisis in England is rather at hand, for the purpose is now avowed, and that by a powerful party, of destroying that sacred union between Church and State which has hitherto been the chief means of our civilisation, and is the only security for our religious liberty.'

have met the resolutions of Mr. Gladstone with a manly, prompt, and direct negative.

Mr. Disraeli, in reply, referring to the opposition which the amendment had received from Lord Cranborne, remarked—

That the noble lord at no time was wanting in imputing to the government motives which would reflect no honour upon them. The noble lord was a man of great talent; there was vigour in his invective, and no lack of vindictiveness, but it wanted finish. There was one thing the noble lord never pardoned,—that was the passing of the Reform Act of last year. But he asked the House what would have been the general state of affairs if the counsels of the noble lord on that subject had prevailed instead of the suggestions which he (Mr. Disraeli) had made, and which the House had adopted? The only objection he had to the attacks of the noble lord was that they invariably produced an echo from the other side. The result of the last attack was that the right hon. member for Calne (Mr. Lowe) had emerged from his cave, or perhaps from a more cynical habitation, and joined the noble lord in a course of reciprocal malignity. In the lines of a poet already quoted in the course of the debate, he

'Hails with horrid melody the moon.'

The right hon. gentleman hated Catholics, he hated the Protestants of Ireland, he hated her Majesty's ministers, and, until Mr. Gladstone placed his hand upon the ark, he appeared almost to hate the right hon. gentleman; but now they had the hour and the man also, it seemed that the clock went wrong, and the man was mistaken. He made these remarks purely in self-defence, never having personally attacked any man in his life (cheers, and cries of 'Peel!') unless first assailed. He did not assert that there was nothing critical in the state of Ireland, but denied that there was an Irish crisis according to the interpretation of Mr. Gladstone. Fenianism was not rampant; it had gained its lowest step, and the country was certainly not afraid of Fenianism. That was one of the most considerable elements of the crisis put forward by Mr. Gladstone; but it had entirely dissolved, and there was nothing else that could be advanced in favour of the great and immediate resolution proposed by the right honourable gentleman. . . . . Mr. Disraeli then went on to say that he had never been deficient in sympathy with the Irish, but nothing surprised him more than the conduct of the Irish people on this question of sentimental grievance. That persons, brave, intelligent, and sanguine, should go about announcing that they were a conquered race was to him a matter of astonishment. . . . . There was only this difference between England and Ireland: that whereas in Ireland it was only a country partially conquered; in England it was done completely. . . . . The next point urged was that the Irish Church was a 'badge of conquest;' but he did not see why it should give more offence to Catholics than the existence of the Established Church in England did to Dissenters. Yet they never saw in this country a burly Nonconformist announcing that he belonged to a conquered race; and that the State Church was a 'badge of conquest.' . . . . The policy of the Conservative party had invariably been one of conciliation; and they believed that by doing justice to the

Irish Roman Catholics they would strengthen the Protestant interest in Ireland. . . . The policy of Mr. Gladstone was very different. He came forward to propose a change which would at once outrage the feelings and interests of a very large and influential portion of the population of Ireland. Year after year parliament had been endeavouring to secure for the Roman Catholics, and especially for the Roman Catholics of Ireland, the full and free exercise of their religion. But had the Protestants of Ireland no regard for their faith? Had they no interest in their church? Had they no sentimental feelings, and were they not to be regarded? What must be thought of a statesman who came forward with a policy which must revive acrimonious feelings, place all classes and creeds in an adverse position, and render Ireland again the scene of every hostile passion, and of every sentiment opposed to political tranquility? The proposal of Mr. Gladstone was to pounce upon all the property of the church; and, as he declined to say what he intended to do with it, it amounted to a scheme of confiscation, and was a violation of every principle of the rights of property, knowing, as they did, that the plundering of churches had produced nothing to the people, although they were the property of the people. They ought to look with the greatest jealousy upon a proposal of this kind, which substituted Papal supremacy for Protestant ascendency, obliterated all trace of what had been done in the last twenty years in the way of conciliation, divorced the government of Ireland from the principles of religion, and left the country to be still a scene of faction and the difficulty of England. In conclusion, Mr. Disraeli said that the high church Ritualists and the followers of the Pope had long been in secret combination. Under the guise of Liberalism,—under the pretence of legislating in the spirit of the age,—they were about, as they thought, to seize upon the supreme authority of the realm; but so long as by the favour of the Queen he sat upon these benches, he would oppose to the utmost of his power the effort which they were making, and which, if successful, would change the character of this country, deprive the subjects of her Majesty of some of their most precious principles, and affect even the tenure of the crown itself. (Loud cheers.)

The ministerial amendment, however, did NOT pass. It was rejected by a majority of sixty. Such a defeat as this was a fatal blow to the administration of Mr. Disraeli; although its effect was, not altogether unreasonably, suspended for a while. The rejection of the ministerial amendment being immediately followed by the adoption of Mr. Gladstone's resolution, a day was appointed for the House going into committee on the subject. Before the end of the month the House, in committee, proceeded to discuss resolutions involving the whole question at issue. Mr. Disraeli again, with great earnestness and energy, opposed the first of the resolutions. But it was all in vain. A thorough fusion had taken place

of all the various shades of Liberalism—including, as a matter of course, the disaffected Irish members, as well as the English and Scotch Red-Radicals: all of whom, more or less determinedly, treated the question as but a means to an end, and that end a revolutionary one of various degrees of democratic disorganization. The votes on the resolution were 330 for, to 265 against; leaving the ministry in a minority of 65. On these numbers being announced, Mr. Disraeli moved the adjournment of the House, in order to give him and his colleagues of the government time to consider their position, and determine on the course it was best to pursue.

The first thing Mr. Disraeli did, in this unfortunate predicament, was to seek an audience of her Majesty, as in duty constitutionally bound to do; and, having obtained admission to the presence of his Sovereign, he at once tendered to her Majesty the resignation of his high office. But the Queen declined to accept any immediate resignation. The Parliamentary Reform Bill the Prime Minister had got passed, altering so materially many of the constituencies, it was but reasonable and fair should be carried into effect without unnecessary delay; and the result, the Conservatives thought, might not improbably be the return of a House of Commons more favourable than the present House had shown itself to be to the policy of their administration. Mr. Disraeli's account of what transpired in his audience of the Queen—which her Majesty had graciously permitted him to make to parliament—was as follows: —'I lost no time,' he said, 'in soliciting her Majesty to be graciously pleased to grant me an audience; and with that promptitude which her Majesty always displays when the public interest is at stake, she granted that audience immediately, so that I had the advantage of being in audience of her Majesty in the afternoon of the very day on which the adverse vote was taken. On that occasion I placed —I am sure fairly and completely—before her Majesty the position of the government, and the position of parties, and the position of the country with respect to them; and I told her Majesty, with her permission, that under the circumstances—with which, from my pre-

vious narrative, the House is perfectly acquainted—the advice which her Majesty's ministers would, in the full spirit of the constitution, offer to her Majesty would be, that her Majesty should dissolve this parliament, and take the opinion of the country as to the conduct of her ministers and the question of the Irish Church. But at the same time, with the full concurrence of my colleagues, I represented to her Majesty that there were important occasions on which it was wise that the Sovereign should not be embarrassed by personal claims, however constitutional, valid, or meritorious; and that if her Majesty were of opinion that the question at issue should be more satisfactorily settled, or the just interests of the country more studied, by the immediate retirement of the present government from office, we were prepared to quit her Majesty's service immediately, with no other feeling but that which every minister who has served the Queen must possess, namely, of gratitude to her Majesty for the warm constitutional support which she always gives to her ministers, and, I may add—as it is a truth which cannot be concealed—for the aid and assistance which every minister receives from a Sovereign who now has had such vast experience of public affairs. In fact, sir, I tendered at once my resignation to the Queen. Her Majesty commanded me to attend her in audience on the next day, when her Majesty was pleased to express her pleasure not to accept the resignation of her ministry, and her readiness to dissolve the parliament so soon as the state of public business would permit. Under these circumstances, I advised her Majesty that, although the present constituency was no doubt as morally competent to decide upon the question of the disestablishment of the Irish Church, as the representatives of the constituency of this House, still it was the opinion of her Majesty's ministers that every effort should be made with a view that that appeal, if possible, should be directed to the new constituency which the wisdom of parliament created last year; and I expressed to her Majesty, that, if we had the cordial co-operation of parliament, I was advised by those who were experienced and skilful in these matters, it would be possible to make arrangements

by which the dissolution should take place in the autumn of this year.' A common-sense view of this statement of the Prime Minister—involving, as it did, constitutional obligation and public justice (seeing that it recognised the rights of the newly enfranchised), as well as official expediency, could not but recommend it to any well-affected and unprejudiced mind. But not so with those who were hungering and thirsting for office, and had not either the patience or the calmness to wait resignedly for the legitimate issues of the crisis which their own labours had created, and their own purposes had incited. Even Mr. Gladstone, who no doubt would have thought it desirable to do as Mr. Disraeli had done under similar circumstances, could not restrain his impatience, or subdue his irritation, at being thus temporarily impeded in his course, and withheld from his coveted exaltation. He cavilled angrily at the plan so judiciously and constitutionally to be pursued, because, as he ingeniously and plausibly expressed it, 'for the first time, I believe, in recent history, certainly within the recollection of the present generation,—or, as far as I know, or probably any body else knows, within any other recollection—the right hon. gentleman seemed'—only *seemed!*—'to make her Majesty the suggester of the course which was about to be pursued by the government, instead of the acceptor, or rejector, of the simple and single advice tendered by them to her, as has been the case on every former occasion.' Was there ever more factious quibbling than this! It was not, let it be noted, any matter of fact he was cavilling at, but only what 'it seemed' to his own partial perception and comprehension. So true it is, that 'all seems yellow to the jaundiced eye.' Mr. Bright, not unnaturally, followed suit to Mr. Gladstone. *His* irritation, indeed, was so excessive that, in his wrath, he almost insinuated that Mr. Disraeli had acted deceitfully towards the Queen, accompanying his innuendoes with snatches of abuse; as, for instance, when he most provokingly declared, 'The right hon. gentleman the other night, with a mixture of pompousness and sometimes of servility, talked at large of the interviews which he had with his Sovereign. I venture to

say that a minister who deceives his Sovereign is as guilty as the conspirator who would dethrone her.' Indignant cries of dissent and reproach suddenly stopped, for a moment, the speaker's discourse, and, apparently, partially recalled him to a sense of propriety; for he most disingenuously exclaimed, 'I do not mean to charge the right hon. gentleman with actually deceiving his Sovereign; but if he has not changed the opinion which he held twenty-five years ago, and which he has said in the main was right, then I fear that he has not stated all that it was his duty to state in the interviews he had with his Sovereign.' This was almost as factious quibbling as Mr. Gladstone's. For Mr. Disraeli had really held no different opinions 'of twenty-five years ago,' bearing with any force, or any fairness, upon the present question. But what of Mr. Gladstone's 'change of his opinions of twenty-five years ago' on this very question at issue? He had held the opinion, and in most solemn tones of warning had proclaimed it, that by disestablishing the Irish Church the country would, in his own awful words, 'entail on itself a curse.' *Now* he was preparing, with the congenial co-operation of Mr. Bright, to disestablish and to disendow it!

But Mr. Disraeli did not appear to heed all this acrimony and accusation. *Mens sibi conscia recti.* This—a mind conscious, that is to itself, of rectitude—has been held, from of old, to be 'the best support under suffering, and the best armour against calumny.'

Not that Mr. Disraeli shrunk from replying and rebuking his assailants. But he was cool, complacent, and dignified, disdaining even to be as scornful or as sarcastic as he so well knew how to be, had it been worth his while. 'I shall not, sir, condescend,' he calmly and dispassionately observed, 'to notice at any length the remarks of the hon. member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright). He says that when it was my duty to make a communication to the House of the greatest importance, and which I certainly wished to make—as I hope I did make it (cheers) in a manner not unbecoming the occasion (cheers)—I was at once "pompous and servile." (Laughter.) Well, sir, if it really suits the heat of party acrimony to impute such

qualities to me, any gentleman may do so, if it please him. (Laughter.) But I am in the memory and in the feeling of *gentlemen* on both sides of the House—and, fortunately, there are *gentlemen* on both sides of this House (cheers)—and they will judge of the accuracy of this representation of my conduct. (Cheers.) It is to *their* feeling and *their* sentiment, on both sides of the House, that I must appeal; and no words of mine, if the charge be true, can vindicate me. The hon. member says that he will make no charge against me; and then he makes insinuations which, if he believes, he ought to bring forth boldly as charges. (Hear, hear.) I defy the hon. member for Birmingham, notwithstanding his stale invective, to come down to this House and substantiate any charge of the kind which he has presumed only to insinuate. Let him prefer those charges. (Hear, hear.) I will meet him; and I will appeal to the verdict only of *gentlemen* who sit on the same side of the House as himself.' (Loud cheers.) Poor Mr. Bright! The cheers—and they came from his own party, as well as Mr. Disraeli's—must have sounded discordantly in his ears; and, let us hope that, whilst he would gladly have sought to 'hide his diminished head,' it was to hide not only his humiliation and confusion, but his regret and his repentance; though, after all, one cannot but apprehend that, even if it were so, it would have to be said, as it was by Shakspeare's Bolingbroke of the treacherous Aumerle, 'Fear, and not love, begat his penitence.'

Despite, however, of all this denunciation, on the part of the Radicals, the session was prolonged to about the usual period, in order that as much as possible of the business in hand might be forthwith disposed of, and the necessary supplies voted,—Mr. Disraeli retaining his position as leader of the House, and as First Minister of the Crown. In the autumn, as promised, parliament was dissolved

The Prime Minister, in his address to his constituents (Thursday, Nov. 19th, 1868), gave an eloquent and thoughtful *resumé* of the condition of public affairs under his administration. He said:—

. . . . 'He thought he might congratulate them upon having at last possessed the franchise, and he might look back himself with some satisfaction that he had

contributed to their possessing it. . . . . They had heard a great deal of the military expenditure of the country. People complained of the great cost of their armies and their navy. But an Englishman should remember this when he was calculating what might be his share in maintaining their armaments,—that an Englishman was free from a tax which was much heavier than anything which any Englishman contributed as his share to the maintenance of their army and navy, and that was that he was free from the conscription. . . . . They heard very much of the expenditure of the government, but he would remind them that there was no body of men so interested in economy as the existing ministry, of whatever party it might be formed, in this country. It was the greatest mistake in the world to suppose that it was the desire or interest of a ministry to be an expensive ministry. What the country was entitled to was an economical government; a cheap government in the nature of things they could not have. . . . . What were the relations of England now with the United States of America? They knew very well that there was every prospect, or rather more than a prospect, of their coming to a settlement with the United States of America, of their coming to a most honourable and friendly settlement not merely of all those difficulties and dissensions which arose out of the great civil war in that country, but difficulties and disagreements which arose from circumstances that had occurred fifteen or twenty years ago; that there was every prospect of their sweeping clean away the whole of those long-standing causes of national misconception; and that the relations between this country and the United States would be those of perfect friendship and confidence. . . . . In thanking his constituents for returning him, he said that no one knew better than himself that in the course of an agitated, and now, he was sorry to say, a long political career, he had done many things which he regretted, and said some things which he deplored. But a man's career must be gauged by its whole tenor and character. (Hear, hear.) And he could say this of himself with the utmost sincerity, that he had always sought to maintain the greatness of his country (applause); he had never had any thoughts of a base or sinister character of self interest (cheers), and that there was no reward which he more desired and which he more prized than the good opinion of his countrymen, in whatever political party they might be ranged.' (Loud cheers.)

But the sober constitutional principles and policy of Conservatism had no fair chance against the political passion and reckless turbulence which had been excited.

The result of the general election was the perilous achievement of a large majority for the Radical party, so that Mr. Disraeli at once resigned office, without awaiting the meeting of parliament.

The following circular was addressed by the right hon. gentleman to his supporters:—

'If parliament were sitting I should not have adopted this course; but as the public acts of a ministry should not be misunderstood, and as there are no other

means of explaining their motives, I have taken the liberty of thus addressing the Conservative members in both Houses of Parliament.

'When her Majesty's Government, in the spring of this year, were placed in a minority in the House of Commons on the question of disestablishing the church in Ireland, they had to consider that the policy proposed had never been submitted to the country, and they believed that the country would not sanction it. They, therefore, felt it their duty to advise her Majesty to dissolve parliament; but to make an appeal to the obsolete constituency would have been an absurdity, and the candid opinion of the country coincided with that of parliament, that no course could be satisfactory unless the voices of the enlarged electoral body were ascertained. All means were, therefore, taken by the ministry to expedite the appeal, and a special statute was passed for the purpose.

'Although the general election has elicited in the decision of numerous and vast constituencies an expression of feeling which in a remarkable degree has justified their anticipations, and which, in dealing with the question in controversy, no wise statesman would disregard, it is now clear that the present administration cannot expect to command the confidence of the newly-elected House of Commons.

'Under these circumstances, her Majesty's ministers have felt it due to their own honour, and to the policy they support, not to retain office unnecessarily for a single day. They hold it to be more consistent with the attitude they have assumed, and with the convenience of public business at this season, as well as more conducive to the just influence of the Conservative party, at once to tender the resignation of their offices to her Majesty, rather than to wait for the assembling of a parliament in which, in the present aspect of affairs, they are sensible they must be in a minority.

'In thus acting, her Majesty's government have seen no cause to modify those opinions upon which they deemed it their duty to found their counsel to the Sovereign on the question of the disestablishment and disendowment of the church. They remain convinced that the proposition of Mr. Gladstone is wrong in principle, probably impracticable in conduct, and, if practicable, would be disastrous in its effects. While ready at all times to give a fair consideration and willing aid to any plan for the improvement of the church in Ireland, to the policy which they opposed last session, rife as they believe it to be with many calamities to society and the state, they will continue, in whatever position they occupy, to offer an uncompromising resistance.

'B. DISRAELI.'

Acting on advice, and adopting the usual alternative, her Majesty sent for Mr. Gladstone, who was directed to form a ministry. Of course it necessarily had to comprise a due representation of the advanced Radicals, without whose active aid and agitation at the elections the Whig-Liberal party could not have secured its large majority. One Radical peculiarity that it possessed was the appointment of Mr. Bright to the post of a cabinet minister. There was

some inconsistency, as well as an unconstitutional anomaly, in a Quaker accepting an official position in so many respects at variance, both socially and politically, with the character, religious and moral, of his singular and eccentric community: a position which unavoidably involved his being placed in direct opposition to some of the cardinal principles of his sect, as, for instance, it involving him, morally as well as politically, in the responsibilities of standing armies, and of naval as well as military armaments and operations, whether aggressive or defensive,—of sundry judicial proceedings, civil as well as criminal,—to say nothing of the proud titles, personal honours, and ostentatious distinctions, with all the rest that belongs to the 'pride, pomp, and circumstance' of a monarchical government. The Quakers' historian and apologist, Fox, asserts that, 'though their principles restrain them from fighting, they may be extraordinarily commissioned to threaten war and foretell it;' and upon this claim, to give no more instances, George Bishop, he shows, one of their great oracles and examples, assigned that character to Oliver Cromwell.[1] Their rules of conscience, and of conduct too, according to the same accredited authority, apply equally to all forms of government, and do not seem to acknowledge one title to it better than another; for, to use their own assertions, 'they do not dispute authority with any man, nor question modes of governance, or trouble their heads with what becomes of this world.'[2] And it is under this principle that they appear to take credit for their complicity with the usurpations of the 'Rump Parliament' and Oliver Cromwell.[3] Quite another authority as to their peculiar principles is Hume, the historian, who thus briefly describes their inveterate opposition to the church:—'From the fervour of their zeal, the Quakers broke into churches, disturbed public worship, and harassed the minister and congregation with railing and reproaches.' A member of such a society, therefore, was in many respects the right sort of man to resist Mr. Disraeli and to co-operate with Mr. Gladstone in overthrowing the Established

[1] Fox's 'History of the Quakers,' pp. 359, 360.
[2] *Ibid*, pp. 362–66.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 375.

Church in Ireland, and depriving it of its emoluments. For although the Quakers, happily, have long been sobered down, and become, as a body, exemplary private citizens, yet many of their inherent principles, as a schismatic and stiff-necked sect, whilst generally kept in abeyance, remain theoretically unchanged.

In the new parliament Mr. Disraeli's position was one that would have been so mortifying to most men as to have disheartened them severely enough to disable them from any energetic resistance to the devices of the party, now more dangerous because more formidable than ever, that had so signally prevailed against him. But there was much, after all, which was unseen by, and therefore unknown to the world, to console and to encourage him. None knew, for instance, so well as he did himself, the high esteem in which he was held by his country; and as one among many proofs of this, we may point to a circumstance in particular, irrespective of other assurances of a less conspicuous nature,—to the great delight that was everywhere expressed at the elevation of Mrs. Disraeli to the peerage, under the title of Viscountess Beaconsfield, of Beaconsfield, as a public acknowledgment of her husband's valuable services to the state, as well in the ministry of the crown as in the great council of the nation. As the *Globe* justly remarked:—

'The announcement that her Majesty the Queen has conferred a peerage on Mrs. Disraeli will be received with unqualified satisfaction by all sections of the community. Mr. Disraeli's genius is admitted by the most determined of his political opponents as unreservedly as it is asserted by his warmest supporters. The brilliant reputation which he has achieved is too solid and altogether too indisputable a fact to form the object of question in any unprejudiced mind. There are, of course, multitudes who hold opinions directly opposed to those which he has so ably expressed and so zealously advocated through his long and active life, but even those who differ the most widely from his views and policy must, and do, yield the homage of profound respect, and acknowledge that the service which he has rendered to the state is neither poor nor perishable. If Mr. Disraeli would enter the chamber of peers he would take his seat with a better right to honour than any man who has been elevated during the last half of the century.'

Parliament assembled on December 10th; but it was not until early in the ensuing spring that the House of Commons resumed the

discussion of Mr. Gladstone's measure. It was a measure which had already, through the resolutions foreshadowing it, as we have shown, met with the strongest denunciation of Mr. Disraeli, who now grappled with it in the most vigorous manner, thoroughly exposing its character, and condemning in the severest terms its injustice and its impolicy,—though all utterly in vain, Mr. Gladstone having succeeded in securing a parliamentary majority against which all opposition was powerless and unavailing.

The ground on which Mr. Disraeli mainly argued against the obnoxious measure was that of the twofold objection to disestablishment as constitutionally impolitic and unjust, and to disendowment as both politically and morally unfair. The impolicy of disestablishment, he showed, would eventually extend its baneful consequences to all classes of society. 'It is because we have an Established Church,' he forcibly argued, 'that we have achieved religious liberty, and enjoy religious toleration; and without the union of the church with the state,' he earnestly declared, 'I do not see what security there would be for either religious liberty or toleration. No error,' he continued, 'could be greater than to suppose that the advantage of the Established Church is limited to those who are in communion with it. Take the case of the Roman Catholic priest. He will refuse—and in doing so he is quite justified, and is, indeed, bound to do so—he will, I say, refuse to perform the offices of his church to any one not in communion with it. The same with the Dissenters. It is quite possible—it has happened, and might happen very frequently—that a Roman Catholic may be excommunicated by his church, or a sectarian may be denounced and expelled by his congregation; but if that happens in this country, the individual in question who has been thus excommunicated, denounced, or expelled, is not a forlorn being. There is the church of which the Sovereign is the head, which does not acknowledge the principle of dissent, and which does not refuse to that individual on any sectarian grounds those religious rites which are his privilege and consolation. I therefore hold that the connection between church and state is really a guarantee for religious liberty

and toleration; that it maintains, as it were, the standard of religious liberty and toleration, just as much as by other means we sustain the standard of value. If you wish to break up a state, and destroy and disturb a country, you can never adopt a more effectual method for the purpose than by destroying at the same time the standards of value and toleration.' This argument against disestablishment—and it is only one among many that might be adduced—considers the case quite irrespective of the evils which must of necessity arise when religion has nothing to do with the government of the kingdom. Take, for instance, the case of the Sovereign: what mischief might there not arise were there no security that the Sovereign must belong to the Church of England, as provided by the constitution of the country? What baneful influences might not the Church of Rome otherwise exert in the royal family, and at court? Again, in the religious duties of parliament, in the army and navy, and still more especially, perhaps, in the administration of justice, what would be the consequences were there not that true and stable standard of religious truth, and orthodoxy, and propriety of religious ordinances, which an Established Church provides and secures? No thoughtful Englishman who has observed the state of things in these respects in the American Republic can have failed to be struck with the strange anomalies, and the great disadvantages generally, which are there experienced, from there being no such standard of religion as that which Mr. Disraeli forcibly referred to as one of the blessings we enjoy under our monarchical institutions.

The other ground of Mr. Disraeli's objection to the measure—that of disendowment being a legalised procedure of confiscation, or plunder—was quite as strongly argued and enforced. 'I consider,' he did not hesitate to say, 'that if the state seizes the property of a corporation without alleging any just cause, it is spoliation. But if the state alleges some penal cause for its violence, though it may be an unfounded, tyrannical, and oppressive one, then I understand the act of the state to be confiscation. I make that distinction between the two processes, and I think the House will find there

is something in it. I am not about to uphold the doctrine that there is no difference between corporate and private property. I acknowledge the difference fully and frankly. The state has relations with all property; but the relations of the state with private and with corporate property are of a different character. I would attempt to express them thus:—the relations of the state to private property are the relations of a guardian; the relations of the state to corporate property are those of a trustee. The duty of a guardian to his ward is mainly to protect his ward; the duties of a trustee are of a more complicated character. Undoubtedly his first duty is to see that the intentions of the founder are fulfilled, as far as the varying circumstances of generations will permit. I will make the admission, for I wish to argue the case fairly, that undoubtedly if he finds that the resources at his command are extravagantly beyond what are necessary for the object in view, or that the purpose of the trust is pernicious, it is his duty to consider by what means a redistribution of those funds and of that property may be safely accomplished. But this I do lay down as a principle which I will maintain against all comers, that under no circumstances whatever ought a trustee to appropriate to himself property of which he is the fiduciary. If that were permitted, there would be no security whatever for property of any description.' This was a plain and reasonable statement of the case. It was common sense, as well as simple equity, and public justice.

The danger of such a measure as an example so likely at no distant day to affect disastrously both England and Scotland, was also pointed out by Mr. Disraeli in forcible terms. Already, he showed, some of Mr. Gladstone's partisans were preparing to appropriate it there. 'There was the hon. member for Birmingham' (Mr. Bright), he said, 'that great master of the mind of the right hon. member for South Lancashire, why he, too, can educate; and that hon. gentleman will take the census returns, and with that shrewd intellect he is so well able to regulate and control he will prove that it is a very clear conclusion that the union between church and

state—that union between authority and religion which has humanized authority, civilized this country, and secured us civil and religious liberty — cannot be maintained. That question is only now at its commencement. Years may elapse ere it is finally decided. But its initiative will have been practically taken, should this bill pass, and some of us may not improbably live to deplore its consequences.'

Another allusion of Mr. Disraeli's on this occasion was partly prophetic of much evil that has since arisen, and which no doubt is to be traced in no slight degree to this tampering with the principle of property. 'I have already stated to the House,' he remarked, 'that a probable consequence of this scheme of spoliation would be the perpetuation of great discontent and confusion in Ireland, and that this would be connected with the question of the tenure and the occupation of land.' He then referred, *inter alia*, to the question of original rights. The clergy would feel, and would complain, that they had been disendowed; and, he argued, their discontent would remind others that, though remotely, they too had had their property taken from them. The claim thus clamoured for, in all cases, would be for restoration. 'All classes would call upon you to restore the popular estates which had been confiscated; and, whatever differences of opinion might still subsist in other respects, all would agree that Irish property was national property.' And has not this idea been publicly evinced and popularly acted upon since the period referred to, in a manner which has threatened, and yet threatens, the most serious mischief to Irish society, and Irish interests of every kind, involving, too, deplorable evils to the whole United Kingdom? It was not as though it could be said, 'To do a great right, do a little wrong.' There was no question of 'right' in the case at all,—not even (reversing the plea) a *little* right to be done, by doing a *great* wrong! No; it was all *wrong* together; and the doing of it had all the appearance of arising from no public necessity, but only from the exigency of such a proceeding to reunite a disorganised political party.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE GLADSTONE-BRIGHT ADMINISTRATION.

'They made and recorded a sort of institute and digest of anarchy, called the RIGHTS OF MAN.'—*Burke.*

THE fate of the Irish Church as an establishment was now sealed. Mr. Disraeli fought for it manfully, but he had no chance against the powerful majority which the country had sent in support of the Gladstonian policy. There has probably never been a more eloquent debate than that which took place in the Commons on the second reading of the bill, on the 18th of March, 1869. Mr. Disraeli, in an address of great earnestness and fervour, moved that it be read again that day six months. We have given some admirable extracts from his speech in the preceding chapter, and we need not further canvass the able arguments he employed. Among those who spoke with especial force on the same side were Dr. Ball and Mr. Gathorne Hardy. The former declared, with a wise foresight which events have fully justified, that the measure would be a severe shock to the rights of property which would bear fruit in an agitation on the land question, and would be the precedent for more serious organic changes. Mr. Gathorne Hardy urged that the bill would revive agitation and increase discontent, and that an interval of peace and industry, and not a destructive measure, wrong in the sight of God, and opposed to the interests of the empire, was the real panacea for Irish evils. On the ministerial side, Mr. Miall and Mr. Bright were very energetic. The last-named assumed the position of a seer, and had this delightful but very delusive vision: 'I see this measure,' he said, 'giving tranquillity to our people, greater strength to the realm, and adding a new lustre and a new dignity to the crown.' Mr. Gladstone wound up the debate, rejoicing with the knowledge that he was master of

the situation in the fact that 'the years, the months, the days that remained to the existence of the Irish Established Church were rapidly flying.' Amidst great excitement which circumstances scarcely justified, seeing that there could be no doubt of the issue, the second reading was carried by a majority of 118. On the third reading Mr. Disraeli delivered a final protest. He expressed his fear that Mr. Gladstone's policy tended to civil war; and said that, whilst the measure had secured the triumph of a party, it had outraged the feelings of a nation. Then, raising a warning voice, he said: 'You may have a great majority now, you may cheer, you may indulge in all the jubilation of a party triumph; but this is a question as yet only begun, and the time will come, and come ere long, when those who have taken part in the proceedings of this House this night, whatever may be their course, and whatever their decision, will look upon it as one of the gravest incidents of their lives, as the most serious scene at which they have ever assisted.' But these solemn words could not daunt the triumphant party, and the third reading passed, amidst renewed cheers, by a majority of 114. In the Lords, equally portentous words were used by Lord Derby; and those who heard him will not readily forget his attitude and manner as, with what voice remained to him in his old age, he emphatically declared, 'If it be for the last time that I have the honour of addressing your lordships, it will be to my dying day a satisfaction that I have been able to lift up my voice against the adoption of a measure the political impolicy of which is only equalled by its moral iniquity.' The bill passed the Lords by a majority of 33, and on July 26th received the royal assent.

Following upon his Irish Church legislation, Mr. Gladstone announced his intention to introduce an Irish Land Bill, and early in 1870 the measure was brought forward. Mr. Gladstone grandiloquently claimed for his scheme that it would help to unite Ireland to England and Scotland by the enduring ties of free will and free affection, and drew a glowing picture of 'peace, order, and a settled and cheerful industry, diffusing their blessings from year to year,

and from day to day, over a smiling land.' Mr. Disraeli was absent through illness when the bill was first brought in, but on the second reading he delivered a powerful oration, in which he said that 'a more complicated, a more clumsy, and a more heterogeneous measure was never yet brought before the attention of parliament.' It was in this speech that he alluded to Mr. Horsman as 'a superior person,' and the phrase was thus introduced:—Mr. Horsman had, whilst Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, objected that it was no part of his duty to bring in bills, because his office was a sinecure. 'And we,' Mr. Disraeli remarked, 'knowing what a superior person he was, did not put an uncharitable construction on his conduct, but said, "This is a part of some profound policy that will end in the regeneration of Ireland, and in the consolidation of her Majesty's United Kingdom."' The taunt conveyed in the phrase 'profound policy' was well justified; indeed, the chief merit, if merit it can be called, of the policy was its deep profundity. It was too profound to be grasped by the ordinary mind, but the less it was understood in its practical effects, the more people sought refuge in those generalizations and plausible sentences about 'justice and peace' which the Liberal party knew so well how to employ.

During 1870 and 1871, Mr. Disraeli was content to allow the ministry to damage their own cause, without making any very hostile demonstrations against them. Mr. Lowe's match tax raised a storm of disapproval, and many other ministerial proceedings did not meet with the favour of the public. 'A blaze of apology' fitly described the way in which the government had existed, and ere another year had elapsed Mr. Disraeli saw that the time had come for taking a more active part. In Easter week, 1872, he visited Manchester, where his reception was of a most enthusiastic character. As an evidence of the remarkable feeling of admiration and pleasure evoked by his presence we may mention that more than two hundred addresses from every part of the country were sent to him. On the 3rd of April a monster meeting was held in the Free Trade Hall, and those who had the privilege of being present will never forget the occasion.

The hall was densely packed, and when Mr. Disraeli entered, accompanied by Lord Derby, Mr. Cross, and other prominent Conservatives, the enthusiasm of the vast assemblage appeared to know no bounds. The speech of Mr. Disraeli was in every way worthy of so memorable a meeting. It occupied three hours and a quarter in delivery, and was a noble declaration of Conservative principles, objects, and designs. Answering first the foolish assertion that the Conservatives had no programme, Mr. Disraeli wittily remarked, 'If a political programme is a policy to despoil churches and to plunder landlords, I confess the Conservative party have no political programme. If a political programme is a policy which attacks or menaces every interest and every institution, every class and calling, then I confess that the Conservative party have no political programme. But if, gentlemen, a policy which has a distinct aim and such as deeply to interest the great body of the people, if this be a political programme, I am here to assert and to vindicate it as one not unworthy of those with whom I act in political life.' Having further stated that they had assembled there to declare their determination to maintain and uphold the constitution to which they were indebted for their freedom and welfare, Mr. Disraeli proceeded to enter upon an eloquent and stirring vindication of the great institutions of the country. He pointed out that it was nearly two centuries since the constitution was settled, and during that time England had not known a revolution, although during that period our country had experienced perhaps more considerable changes than any other country in the world. What was the reason of this? Because the wisdom of our forefathers placed the prize of supreme power without the sphere of honour and passions. 'Whatever the struggles of parties, whatever the struggles of faction, whatever the exultation and excitement of the public mind, there was ever something in England round which all parties and all classes could rally, which represented the majesty of the law, the administration of justice, which was at the same time the guarantee of all our personal rights, and the fountain of honour. It was well,' he continued, 'to realise

what was the meaning of a country not experiencing a revolution in so long an interval. It meant the continuous enjoyment of honour, the continuous employment of ingenuity, the unbroken application of scientific discoveries to the welfare, and comfort, and convenience of men. It meant the accumulation of capital, it meant those triumphs of invention and power which covered the district in which they were assembled, and supplied the requirements of the world. It meant that undeviating application of skill to the cultivation of the soil which had extracted in this country from a somewhat reluctant globe harvests more exuberant than were furnished by lands nearer the sun. It meant above all the long-established order which was the only parent of public liberty and political rights; and all this they owed to the throne.' In like manner Mr. Disraeli graphically and accurately pourtrayed the immense advantages the nation had reaped by the existence of the House of Lords, and how important it was also to maintain the alliance of church and state. Referring next to those extravagant views which had been recently promulgated on various subjects, he attributed them to the fact that for the first time within his knowledge a British government had been formed avowedly on the principle of violence—to despoil churches, to plunder landlords, and to assail the institutions and classes of the country. Having made extraordinary efforts, their paroxysm had ended in prostration. At the present moment they reminded him of one of those marine landscapes not unusual on the coast of South America —they beheld a range of exhausted volcanoes. But there was still danger; and Mr. Disraeli showed how this danger was menacing by the alliances which ministers did not hesitate to form with extreme men, and by their equivocal utterances on vital questions. As to his own political views of what the necessities of the time required, he said he considered the health of the people to be the most important subject which could engage the attention of statesmen.

As may be remembered, the Manchester speech had a great effect upon the public mind. Its main arguments were unanswerable, and the worst that critics could say of the policy Mr. Disraeli unfolded

as one of immediate urgency was that it was a 'policy of sewage.' This was the description given of it by Mr. Henry James at a Liberal banquet at Bath; but though his audience laughed somewhat immoderately, their merriment was not shared by the general public. The *Pall Mall Gazette*, giving able utterance to the views of the majority, remarked that 'Liberal speakers need not be so hard on the poor men who were only guilty of the crime of valuing their own lives, and the lives of their families, rather more than the ballot. Would any Liberal trouble himself about the Irish Church, or the Irish Land Bill, or Promotion by Purchase, if he lived in a damp unventilated cellar, with nothing but foul air to breathe, and foul water to drink?' It was plain that Mr. Disraeli had hit upon a practical and much needed scheme of genuine and useful reform when he declared his intention of removing the sanitary evils which prevailed, and the country turned to it with all the more earnestness from the fact that the doings of the Liberals, exciting though they might be, were producing no appreciable results of a useful character, and were not likely to do so. As another press critic pointed out, they stirred everything just enough to make matters unpleasant, and did no practical good. 'Like a foolish and over-energetic servant entering a house, they lift everything, disturb everything, and clean nothing; and the whole effect of their conduct is to raise a cloud of dust, and leave matters no better than they were.'

Following up the manifest advantage which he had gained by his stirring defence of Conservative principles at Manchester, Mr. Disraeli spoke at a great meeting of Conservatives at the Crystal Palace on the 24th of June. 'Mr. Disraeli,' writes one reporter, 'was the lion of the evening, and was received as Conservatives well know how to greet their chief; they cheered him over and over again for some minutes, and were only silenced by the emphatic motion for silence made by the toast-master.' In this masterly address the right hon. gentleman confined himself to some suggestions on the present state of the constitutional cause, and the prospects which lay before them as a party. We give a brief quotation:—

'Gentlemen, some years ago, now indeed not an inconsiderable period, but in the memory of many who are present, the Tory party experienced a great overthrow. I am here to admit that in my opinion it was deserved. A long course of power and prosperity had induced it to sink to a state of apathy and indifference. It had deviated from the great principles of that political association which had so long regulated the affairs and had been associated with the glory of England. (Cheers.) Instead of those opinions which were pursued by Pitt and Lord Grenville, and which those great men inherited from the Tory statesmen who preceded them, not less illustrious, the Tory system had degenerated into a policy which found an adequate basis in the principles of exclusiveness and restriction. Gentlemen, a body of public men distinguished by their rapacity took advantage of these circumstances. They seized the helm of affairs in a manner the honour of which I do not for a moment question, but they introduced a new system into our political life. Influenced by the philosophy of politics on the Continent, they endeavoured to substitute cosmopolitan instead of national principles (applause), and they baptised the new scheme of politics with the plausible name of Liberalism. (Cheers and laughter.) Far be it from me to intimate that a country like England should not profit by the political experience of Continental nations not inferior in civilisation. But the tone and tendency of Liberalism cannot be long concealed. It is to attack the institutions of the country under the name of "Reform," and to make war upon the manners and customs of the people under the pretext of progress. (Applause.) Gentlemen, during the forty years that have elapsed from the commencement of this new system, although the superficial have seen upon its surface merely the contentions of political party, the real state of affairs has been this—the attempt of one party to establish in this country cosmopolitan ideas, and the efforts of another—unconscious efforts sometimes—to recur to and resume the national principles to which they attribute the greatness and the glory of the country.' (Applause.)

Mr. Disraeli claimed for the Tory party that it was nothing if it was not national, and went on to point out how it had always struggled to preserve our national institutions and to elevate and improve the condition of the people. He described their attempts, which the Liberals had resisted, to lessen the hours of labour and to humanise toil, and referred to the criticism to which his own appeal in favour of sanitary legislation had been subjected by the Liberal party. He wound up by declaring that England had to decide between national principles and cosmopolitan principles, and his conviction was that they would take care to deliver to their posterity a land of liberty, of prosperity, of power, and of glory. In this forcible way did Mr. Disraeli impress great truths upon the minds of the people, and the effect of them was apparent in the ever-growing distrust with which the action of the majority in the Commons was regarded.

It was in the fourth year of this most unsatisfactory, because so dangerously disorganising parliament, that Mr. Disraeli sustained a domestic calamity which for a while had a severely depressing effect upon him, heaped, as it was, upon so many public cares and anxieties, which must already have been more than enough to bear. We allude to the death of the amiable and affectionate partner of his life, and anxious sharer of his solicitudes, the Viscountess Beaconsfield, to whom so much of his success in public life was materially owing, and who had been indeed, as we have shown on his own assurance, his 'better half' in the best and highest sense of that significant phrase. 'By the exercise of her power of discriminating organization,' says one whom we have already quoted, and who writes from a personal knowledge of her domestic character, 'the household at Hughenden and in London was maintained by her on a footing consistent with the dignity of the statesman. She bestowed thought on every detail, and nothing was too minute for her to study, if it could contribute to the gratification of him to whom she was so faithful a helpmate. Many were her thoughtful little kindnesses to both poor and rich. Children she loved dearly. When near fourscore years she exerted herself in a manner that might have given a lesson to a woman of thirty.'[1] The *Times*, in an able article on the death of her ladyship, justly remarked—'She stands out a striking illustration of the power the most unobtrusive of women may exercise, while keeping herself strictly to a woman's sphere. Looking back on the long and tender relationship which has been gently dissolved in the course of nature, we are irresistibly reminded of the feelings expressed by Mohamed when the Prophet of the Faithful lost the loving woman he had married in days of comparative obscurity. "By God," he exclaimed in an outburst of regretful gratitude, as he raised her solemnly to the rank of the four perfect women, "there never can be a better wife. She believed in me when men despised me. She relieved my wants when I was poor and per-

[1] 'Some Personal Recollections of the Later Years of the Earl of Beaconsfield.' By Lady John Manners.

secuted by the world." It was deep-seated kindly sentiment of this sort which made Mr. Disraeli the devoted husband that he was. It is no fault of ours if we have to write rather of this husband than the wife. From their wedding day until now the existence of the one was merged in that of the other. It was their mutual happiness that the wife lived only in the husband; the husband's extraordinary career was the happy achievement of her life, and it was her pride to shine in the reflection of his fame. . . . Her love for him was wonderful, "passing the love of women." It was shown in traits of unobtrusive heroism worthy of the matrons of republican Rome. Few men can boast the courageous self-command which made her conceal, during a long drive to Westminster, the pain of a finger crushed in the carriage-door, lest she should agitate her husband on the eve of a great party debate. She knew a word could always bring her the sympathy that was her sweetest consolation, but to the last her one thought was to spare him. Surprised by a sudden flow of blood from an incurable cancer, knowing that her doom was certain, and that her happy wedded life was fast drawing to its end, she had the touching resolution to preserve her secret; while, all the time knowing it as well as she, he never for a moment suffered her to guess his knowledge, or gave her the grief of seeing him suffer. It was the graceful symbol of the chivalrous devotion which had never wavered when, in November 1863, he could offer her the peerage bestowed in acknowledgment of a distinguished career.' And, as the same talented writer remarks, 'England deplored even the timely termination of an essentially English union,' and the sympathies of the nation were with Mr. Disraeli in the sad bereavement which he had sustained in the midst of his political warfare, when his energies and his efforts were most needed to give those final blows which should shake the tottering edifice of Liberalism to its centre.

When the grief at the loss of his beloved wife had been slightly assuaged by time, Mr. Disraeli resumed his active political life, well knowing that in so doing he was acting in the way she would most have desired had she still been living. It was not long ere a crisis

arrived. Defeated by three votes on the second reading of the Irish University Bill (March 12, 1873), Mr. Gladstone tendered his resignation, and Mr. Disraeli was sent for by the Queen. The more impetuous of the Conservatives were anxious that their leader should forthwith assume office, but Mr. Disraeli saw the difficulty of attempting to conduct the affairs of the country so long as there was a hostile majority in the House of Commons. He therefore wisely declined the responsibility, and Mr. Gladstone resumed his position. The reasons which induced Mr. Disraeli to decline office were thus stated by him: 'Although the public elections during the last two years had shown that there had been a considerable change of public opinion in favour of the Conservative party, still Mr. Gladstone had a very large majority—not less than eighty; and he pointed out to her Majesty that the recent division would not in any degree modify the majority; in fact, that the majority which led to the discomfiture of Mr. Gladstone was owing to a section of the Liberal party—the Irish members who represented the Roman Catholic interest. He told her Majesty there was no common union between himself and that party, their object being to establish a Roman Catholic university, and he further disagreed with them on the policy of disestablishing the Irish Church. These two points placed an insurmountable difficulty between himself and the Irish party; and, under these circumstances, he asked to be relieved from taking office.' The wisdom of the course pursued was abundantly illustrated by subsequent events. The ministry lost ground from day to day, and Mr. Disraeli, as opportunity arose, contributed to its downfall by his skilful onslaughts.

On the 3rd of December, 1873, he addressed a letter to Lord Grey de Wilton regarding the Bath election, contested in the Conservative interest by Mr. Forsyth, Q.C. After congratulating the constituency on the considerate and encouraging support given on his behalf, the right hon. gentleman launched the following philippic against the government: 'For nearly five years the ministers have harassed every trade, worried every profession, and assailed or menaced every class, institution, and species of property in the country. Occa-

sionally they have varied this state of civil warfare by perpetrating some job which outraged public opinion, or by stumbling into mistakes which have been always discreditable and sometimes ruinous. All this they call a "policy," and seem quite proud of it; but the country has, I think, made up its mind to close this career of plundering and blundering.'

Thus gradually, but surely, was the position of the Liberal party weakened. Seat after seat was, at by-elections, lost to the Liberals, and the administration of Mr. Gladstone thereby weakened and perplexed. There were also dissensions in the heterogeneous confederacy to which that administration had to look for support. It had on these and other accounts come to be thought desirable, it would appear, to make another appeal to the country; and, in March, 1874, somewhat to the surprise of the rank and file, at least, of both parties, Mr. Gladstone advised her Majesty to dissolve parliament. The general election that immediately followed was by no means characterised by more than ordinary excitement; and to this, probably, was very much owing its somewhat unexpected, though most happy result: that of a substantial Conservative majority.

Following the example of Mr. Disraeli in 1868, Mr. Gladstone resigned immediately on the (to him and his ministry) untoward result being ascertained; and, as a matter of course, his resignation was at once accepted by the Queen. What was of necessity to follow could be no matter of doubt. There was no one, however elevated in station, or prominent in the Conservative party, to compete with him who had already shown such signal capacity for the Premiership, who enjoyed the entire confidence of his influential party, and in whom the Sovereign he had already served in that capacity with ability and fidelity had found such great reason so implicitly to confide.

It was, therefore, but the fulfilment of the general expectation of the country, and of the joyous hope, and the gratifying satisfaction, of that large majority of the parliamentary constituencies of the country which, virtually, had dismissed Mr. Gladstone from office, to learn

as promptly and as certainly as it did, that the Queen had not lost a moment in sending for her former Prime Minister, and again committing to his discretion the formation of a new and Conservative cabinet,—a duty which, most responsible, and not improbably arduous, though it might be felt to be, was yet discharged with all due and reasonable despatch, and with the cordial approval, it was believed, of all concerned.

'Next to the assumption of power,' Mr. Disraeli had long before observed, 'was the responsibility of relinquishing it.' He had now had experience of both those trials; and doubtless he may have found that, of the two, the responsibility of relinquishing *was* indeed truly next—certainly in anxiety, if not also in apprehension—to that of assuming it. Yet, on this occasion, the reassumption of power must have had much to relieve it, not, of course, of its responsibility, yet assuredly of its anxiety, if only from the gratifying circumstances under which it had arisen. For he had done nothing to bring it about that had any reference to himself, personally; he had not sought it, nor was there anything of a personal nature, at least, to show that he had even coveted it. What a contrast, then, to so many of the popularity-hunters of his day, in the crooked paths they had so often had to tread whilst seeking to vitiate his influence, or thwart his policy, in order to get into office again; for, surely, no one could ever justly say of him, as with only too much truth it has had to be said of others,—

> 'He takes up power, and lays it down,
> As giddy rabbles smile or frown.'

Mr. Disraeli's release from official cares and duties during the period of the Gladstone administration, from 1870 onwards, afforded him opportunities of much-needed relaxation; of which, as far as possible, he gladly availed himself, and in no way more agreeable, one may be sure, than by resuming his powerful and often enchanting pen as a novelist,—after having laid it aside for about twenty years, owing to the all-absorbing public duties he was called upon to discharge in his eventful parliamentary career. This new effort of his

genius was his sparkling romance of 'Lothair,' which secured, on the instant, an unprecedentedly large sale of edition after edition, not only at home, but on the continent of Europe, and in the United States of America; the fame of his able and successful statesmanship having doubtless excited an universal interest in the novel which even its great literary merits, as a brilliant work of fiction, might otherwise have failed to produce. It is an opponent[1]—political and general—and one that evidently had no desire to yield, if he could help it, to the fascinations of so clever a novel, who has yet felt constrained, in attempting to censoriously criticise it, thus remarkably to point out what are, in fact, some of its greatest attractions:—'The novel bears the closest resemblance to the productions of his earlier days; as in them, passages of splendid diction alternate with passages of vapid inanity; and the book—strange to say—is characterised, too, by its admiring descriptions of the nobility, their mansions, and their luxurious surroundings,—a form of mean adulation of which one would think Mr. Disraeli's attainment of one of the highest positions in England might have cured him;' as doubtless so it would, had there been anything so servile, or so foolish in him, to cure. But as justly might the Waverley novels be similarly found fault with, for their constant descriptions of the 'mansions and luxurious surroundings'—full of luxury as *they* undoubtedly were for the age, though quainter also, of necessity, to be in character with the period. Such descriptions give an air of reality to fiction which is often one of its greatest charms, as well as conveying most vividly its graphic instructions. Perhaps the critic we have quoted would have preferred a novel according to 'the receipt for writing one' which Mr. Disraeli himself had so facetiously given, in the days of his youth, as follows:—'Take a pair of pistols and a pack of cards, a cookery book and a set of new quadrilles; mix them up with half an intrigue and a whole marriage, and divide them into three equal portions.'[2]

The publication of 'Lothair,' as we have said, created a sensation

[1] Mr. O'Connor, M.P., in his 'Biography of Lord Beaconsfield.'
[2] The novel of 'The Young Duke.'

in the literary world. There were several causes which produced this result. First and foremost was the distinguished position of the author, and his well known ability as a novelist. His merited fame would have alone gained for any production of his pen a hearty reception. Then the report was rife that under the guise of fiction living men would be freely dealt with, and public curiosity was aroused. Most of Mr. Disraeli's novels are preceptive, and people wondered what principles would be enforced, and what warning notes would be sounded, in this new production. When it appeared, and its subject, if not also its object, was clearly ascertained, the interest rapidly intensified. No novel could have been better adapted to the circumstances of the times. The Protestant Church of Ireland had, as we have shown, been ruthlessly assailed. Men's minds had been drawn irresistibly to the subject of churches and church establishments. The opponents of Mr. Gladstone's policy had urged, and urged strongly, that in disestablishing the church in Ireland a strong bulwark against Popery had been pulled down. So long as that establishment remained associated with the state there was the clear bright light of Protestantism shining before all the world, as the light by which the state would be guided—as the pure faith long struggled for, nobly upheld, which should be for ever the national faith of the United Kingdom. Now that the disruption had taken place, and the state had disowned the church, would not the Roman element preponderate more strongly than ever? Was it not even gaining ground day by day in our own land? These were serious questions which men were asking themselves, and events were occurring to assist in framing an answer. Rich people of noble birth and ancient lineage had recently 'gone over,' and distinguished scholars had forsaken the Protestant faith. Mr. Disraeli had noted the insidious but certain advances of Rome, and had raised his warning voice against any tampering with the connection between church and state, as likely to be fraught at such a critical time with serious evils. 'The ultimate triumph,' he wrote, 'were our church to fall, would be to that power which would substitute for the authority of

our sovereign the supremacy of a foreign prince'—which would, as he might justly have added, carry us back, if it had the power, to the dark and servile days when England's king was a vassal, and English subjects bent the knee in humble and abject prostration before the Papal throne.

We do not say that the sole object of 'Lothair' was to confirm and extend the warning which Mr. Disraeli had given as to the danger of severing church from state; but it must have had, and, indeed, must always have whilst it is read amongst us, the effect of putting people upon their guard against ingenious and effective assaults upon the Protestant faith. The book is written in no bitter spirit; it does not launch into any wild tirades against Romanists or their creed. Where it represents a Cardinal expounding the articles of his belief, it does so in language which a Cardinal might use; and where it describes the services of the Roman Church, it does so in respectful terms which do not contain a word of satire, sarcasm, or reproach. Take an instance:—

'There is only one church, and only one religion,' said the Cardinal; 'all other forms and phrases are mere phantasms, without root, or substance, or coherency.'

Place this extract from 'Lothair' by the side of one from Cardinal Newman's writings:—

'How different are all religions that ever were from the lofty and unchangeable Catholic Church. They flourish under a certain temperature, and die if they are transplanted.'

Or again, Mr. Disraeli's Cardinal says, speaking of the Church of England:—

'It was mine. I think of it ever with tenderness and pride. Parliament made the Church of England, and Parliament will unmake the Church of England.'

Cardinal Newman writes:—

'As I have received so much good from the Anglican establishment, can I have the heart to wish to see it overthrown? . . . . We see in the English Church nothing more or less than an establishment. Its life is an Act of Parliament.'

Many more such instances might be adduced did space permit. There is thus no tone of exaggeration in the language which Mr.

Disraeli puts into the mouth of his characters; on the contrary, we should be disposed to say the fidelity of the portraits constitute in a great measure the strength of the book. For whom those portraits were intended there was naturally much speculation at the time; but into this we need not enter, as it does not in the least affect the design of the work.

Lothair is, at the period of his introduction to the reader, a young man in his 'teens. He is an orphan, the possessor of a title, and the heir to vast estates. The extent of his wealth is somewhat startling to ordinary mortals. We read of a little item of £238,000 timber-money paid into the bank in one day, and of 'unlimited credit' and huge balances at the bankers. It will readily be conceived, therefore, that a man with such wealth and such influence—for, after all, does not influence go more in this fallen world with wealth than with conduct or brains?—was an object of great interest to society. His guardians were very different in their stations and in their views. One was uncle of Lothair, a sturdy Scotch noble, Protestant to the core; and the other a clergyman, who, since the death of Lothair's father, had seceded from the English Church, and risen to the high position of a Cardinal in the Church of Rome. As may be imagined, differences soon arose as to the young man's training, which culminated in an appeal to the courts, and in sending Lothair to Oxford. At the University he became the friend of a Duke's son, and received an invitation to accompany him to Brentham, one of the ducal seats. The Duchess had known him from a boy, hence there was a twofold reason why his reception at the Duke's mansion should be one of great cordiality. The visit extended over some little time, and the incidents attending it are cleverly described. Lothair falls in love with Corisande, one of the Duke's daughters, and asks permission of the Duchess to woo her, but is refused on the ground that neither of them had seen enough of the world. So Lothair goes forth to see more of the world, and has some remarkable experiences, which are told with so much skill that the reader cannot fail to watch his every movement with intense interest. We see him drawn into

society of a very varied character. Now he is staying with a Romanist family, and is induced to attend the services of the Roman Church. The Cardinal visits him, endeavouring with great skill to influence his mind; and what with the efforts combined of Cardinal, priests, and lords and ladies—especially a beautiful Miss Arundel—he is so far drawn into the net that he proposes building a huge cathedral, and has plans drawn for his inspection. Then come strong influences of a contrary character. He meets a lady of unusual charms—Theodora, an Italian, who is married to Colonel Campian, an American officer and a friend of Garibaldi—and is so smitten with her that he joins in a campaign, in which she takes an active part, against the Papal troops. Theodora is killed, and before she dies she extracts a promise from Lothair that he will never enter the Roman communion. Subsequently Lothair is wounded, taken care of by Miss Arundel, and then follows an account of the ingenious way in which the Roman Catholics endeavoured to secure this wealthy prize. For a full account of the wiliness of this effort we must refer the reader to the entertaining pages of the book. Suffice it to say here that the attempt failed, and Lothair reached home in time to reassure his anxious friends ere they had given him up for lost, and to win the hand of Lady Corisande, as firm a Protestant as any of them.

From this very brief and inadequate sketch it will be readily understood that the design of the book is novel, but well chosen, considering the object it is doubtless intended to serve. As to the execution it is worthy of all praise. Never for a moment does the interest flag. We are introduced to new personages and to new scenes with amazing rapidity. One by one they flit before us as in a phantasmagoria, and we cannot but wonder what, with each and all, the end will be. In the midst of this crowd of distinguished personages, and in these startling *dénouements*, the figure of Lothair stands ever prominent, and we never lose sight of him for a moment from the beginning to the end. The book would not be Disraeli's if it did not contain many remarkable and instructive expressions. We extract one or two by way of illustration:

'The standing committee of the Holy Alliance of Peoples all rose, although they were extreme Republicans, when the General entered. *Such is the magical influence of a man of action over men of the pen and the tongue.*'

'Our days should be pure and holy and heroic, full of noble thoughts and solemn sacrifice.'

'The world is devoted to physical science because it believes these discoveries will increase its capacity of luxury and self-indulgence. But the pursuit of science leads only to the insoluble. When we arrive at that barren term, the Divine Will summons man as it summoned Samuel.'

'The toiling multitude have their sorrows which, I believe, will some day be softened, and obstacles hard to overcome; but I have always thought that the feeling of satiety, almost inseparable from large possessions, is a surer cause of misery than ungratified desires.'

'It is the first duty of a state to attend to the frame and health of the subject.'

'The great majority of men exist but do not live, like Italy in the last century. The power of the passions, the force of the will, the creative energy of the imagination—these make life.'

These are a few striking passages selected almost at random, but the book is full of such, and can be read again and again without that feeling of satiety which we are sagely and truly told is 'a surer cause of misery than ungratified desires.' The reception of the work by the press was hearty, though the author had some bitter critics, as he doubtless expected to have, for who so well accustomed to them as he? The *Quarterly* described it as a 'failure,' as Disraeli's maiden speech had been denominated a failure years before. On the other hand, the *Evening Standard* affirmed that if 'Lothair' should be the last production of its author's pen (as had been predicted), it would 'worthily crown the edifice of his literary fame;' while the *Globe* wittily declared, 'If we Conservatives in our present position in the House of Commons cannot avoid comparing the reappearance now of our leader as a political novelist, to Nero's fiddling while Rome was burning, we are naturally proud of his performance being so infinitely more successful than that which scandalised imperial Rome.' An equally appreciative *critique* appeared in an influential American magazine, *Putnam's Monthly*. '"Lothair,"' it was remarked, 'is the ripe fruit of the most eventful and interesting life which has been

lived by any politician of our times. It suggests, where it does not positively embody, the results of well-nigh half a century of hard thinking on all the perplexing problems that have entered into the recent political and religious agitations of England and of Europe. It betrays much of the inner life of a man who has fought his way to supremacy under circumstances that would have appalled and kept down ninety-nine out of a hundred of England's bravest and most adventuresome spirits; while it breathes the very atmosphere of that elegant patrician life which charmed even such a democrat as Emerson, and has furnished Disraeli with a constant inspiration, never degraded on his part by unworthy fawning.' In America the book had a large sale, and the author was justified in a very short time in saying of it that it had been more extensively read by the people of the United Kingdom and the United States than any work that had appeared for the last half century. That Mr. Disraeli was highly pleased at such a result is abundantly evident. Writing to his American publisher he said, 'I am gratified by the sympathy of your countrymen, and that my writings should contribute to the pleasure and amusement of the far West.'

Among other incidents of no ordinary interest in Mr. Disraeli's career during the interesting period we have been remarking upon, there was one rather out of the common routine, the gratifying nature of which must have recompensed him in no slight degree for his trials during so tiresome a time of parliamentary opposition and party adversity. We allude to the occasion of his installation at Glasgow University, where he met with a reception quite eclipsing in splendour and enthusiasm most, if not all, of his predecessors; and, not only by his inaugural address, but in other varied and popular assemblages of all sorts and conditions of men, social and political, produced impressions, by the eloquence, the wisdom, and occasionally, in their proper place, by the wit and humour of his public utterances, which, we have been assured by those who heard them, were calculated to secure a life-long retention, and, upon the rising generation, more especially, to have a most edifying and emulating effect. We have

only room for one quotation from his Glasgow speech, and it is an admirable one that deserves more repetition and notice than it appears yet to have received:—

'The spiritual nature of man is stronger than codes or constitutions. No government can endure which does not recognize that for its foundation, and no legislation last which does not grow from this fountain; the principle may develop itself in manifest forms in the shape of many creeds and many churches, but the principle is divine. As time is divided into day and night, so religion rests upon the providence of God and the responsibility of man. One is manifest, the other mysterious, but both are facts. Nor is there, as some would teach you, anything in these convictions that tends to contract our intelligence or our sympathies; on the contrary, religion invigorates the intellect and expands the heart. He who has a due sense of his relations to God is best qualified to fulfil his duties to man.'

CHAPTER XXIX.

A PATRIOTIC POLICY.

Peace hath her victories,
No less renown'd than war.—*Milton.*

THIS second elevation of Mr. Disraeli to the highest office of state—that of First Minister of the Crown—was entered upon under very different auspices from those of the former occasion. Although then, as now, the honour conferred was not gained by political intrigue, or party manœuvre,—or even by any agitation for a political triumph, or popularity-hunting of any kind, —yet the distinction attained and the power acquired so honourably, because constitutionally and disinterestedly, did not then give those assurances of success, and therefore of stability and continuance, which now had been so fully secured, by reason of his having obtained a decisive parliamentary majority at the general election: the ordeal to which his Liberal predecessor had—as many of Mr. Gladstone's own followers even admitted—so rashly ventured to appeal, in order to arrest, as he vainly thought, that downward progress towards utter defeat and downfall which he could not but perceive had set in. No one, we may be sure, felt more agreeably surprised at the result of that memorable election than Mr. Disraeli himself. That a reaction had been going on for some short time, the Liberal ministers themselves, or at any rate their head and chief, the Premier, had doubtless felt, and become afraid of; and it was in the mistaken belief that a dissolution of the parliament in which its signs and symptoms had become apparent to the keen and anxious perception of Mr. Gladstone, would turn back the adverse tide, and enable his ministry—having 'trimmed its sails to catch the passing breeze'—to regain its prosperity, and enjoy another successful term of office, and therefore of

power, that the decision was arrived at somewhat suddenly and unexpectedly to make an appeal to the people. What the result of that appeal would be soon became apparent. As one striking Conservative triumph at the poll after another raised the hopes of the opposition, so did it, of course, excite the fears of the ministerialists; and by the time the election contests were half over, it became evident that Mr. Disraeli would be restored to the Premiership, and this time with a majority that would ensure his carrying on the affairs of the country, both in executive administration and in constitutional legislation, throughout the full term of the new parliament that was elected; and this, notwithstanding that the elections took place under all those disadvantages which adverse government influences would inflict, and which the Liberal party knew so well how to appropriate.

That it was high time a Conservative administration was called into existence again had manifestly become the settled conviction of a majority of the parliamentary constituencies of the kingdom, as the signal result of Mr. Gladstone's appeal to the country most strikingly proved; and equally manifest was it that no one was to be found so capable of being at the head of such an administration as Mr. Disraeli. It was on many accounts *high time;* for dangerous breaches in the constitution at home, and one display of weak and mischievous policy after another, as well in our colonial possessions as in our foreign relations, were threatening to become irreparable, unless instantly repaired and counteracted. It was no light task, therefore, that Mr. Disraeli and his colleagues had to perform, in succeeding a ministry by which some of the most pernicious of those principles of Liberalism that must inevitably weaken and disorganize a monarchical system of government were being insidiously appropriated. And this view of the case was by no means confined to the Conservative party. The elections themselves showed it most significantly, the Conservative majorities being in many boroughs enlarged by the votes of moderate Liberals, who had become alarmed at the lengths to which ministers and their Radical partisans were going, in what was exultingly boasted of as 'a policy of democratic

progress.' Some of the more prudent and more patriotic of the Liberal organs of the press gave the strongest indications of this; and one which in many respects, and most ably, had displayed predilections of a decidedly Radical character, was at length constrained to remark, 'It does indeed seem that the union of a common hostility to existing institutions has now a stronger practical tie than any community of hope and faith.'[1]

Various important interests of the country had been harassed, impaired, and injured; and the honour, as well as the welfare of the kingdom thereby imperilled, if not also degraded. Exorbitant 'Alabama claims' were paid to America, under circumstances that betokened timidity rather than equity or generosity. The Black Sea treaty, restraining Russian aggression, was contemptuously torn up, and cast remorselessly into that *Pontus Euxinus* as into the 'waters of oblivion;' while the act itself soon began to develop its significance, both on the confines of the Ottoman dominions, and the frontiers of our own Indian Empire, which, had it been much longer disregarded, as the Gladstone ministry were disregarding it, might have placed our Eastern interests in and around the Levant and the Euxine, and even in Hellenic isles and territories, nay, in British India itself, in imminent peril of being seriously disturbed, if not actually invaded. In some of our colonies—those in South Africa more especially—that old and well-tried colonial system that has been so successful in creating for us a prosperous colonial empire, was being very questionably dealt with. Ireland, too, was feeling the effects of Radical tampering with disloyalty and disaffection; whilst in other parts of the United Kingdom, nearer the seat of government, important national interests were threatened, and assailed. With regard to several of these great national and imperial interests thus imperilled, Mr. Disraeli had already exposed the mischiefs that were being inflicted under the disintegrating influences of a democratic Liberalism. As, for instance, when, so long before as in 1847, he thus wrote in his celebrated memoir of a lately deceased and deeply

[1] *Spectator*, September, 1873.

lamented colleague:—'In the course of the debate'—one to which he had been referring—'a follower of Lord George Bentinck'—Mr. Disraeli himself—'lamenting the destruction of the colonial system, and expressing his belief that we should ere long have to reconstruct it, observed that it was the characteristic of our history that this country generally retraced its steps. He attributed the prosperity of England in a great measure to this cause. We did not commit less blunders than other countries, but we were a people more sensible of our faults. The history of England, he said, was the history of reaction. We once destroyed, for example, our church establishment, and we replaced it. We destroyed our ancient monarchy, and we restored it. We destroyed the House of Lords, and yet we were now obliged to take our bills to them for their sanction. We even abolished the House of Commons, and yet here we were at the end of the session debating a great question.'[1] Things had gone wrong so far under the ministry which Mr. Disraeli's had now been called into existence to supplant, that even the Marquis of Salisbury, one of the more distinguished members of the new cabinet, could not help being despondent as to the chances of their being able to remedy the political mischiefs of the recent past. 'The processes of destruction,' he said, 'are in their nature irrevocable. You can no more set on foot an institution which has been cast down, than you can raise the dead. The continuity of existence is broken, and the traditions that cling about it are dissipated. Its power for good is gone. If you were to set it up, it would not be setting up the old thing that had existed, but a new thing that you had invented in its place. You cannot recall the past.' We have gone into this brief retrospect of the state of things political, and of opinions respecting them, at the period of Mr. Disraeli's second accession to the Premiership, in order to give some idea of what the Conservative ministry was expected to do, and what, in fact, it did not hesitate to set about doing without delay, but which it had by no means completed doing, even after the six eventful years of an active and diligent

[1] 'Life of Lord George Bentinck.'

discharge of its difficult and arduous duties. And undoubtedly it was a great national calamity that, the passions of the people having been madly excited by Liberal and Radical demagogues, the public mind so lamentably perverted on subjects affecting some of the highest interests of the kingdom, and for the express purpose of upsetting a Conservative administration, such a result should have been produced that what the Conservative government successfully did to remedy past mischiefs, and restore to the country the more wholesome influences of a stricter and happier constitutional policy, should have been thereafter either wholly counteracted or virtually undone.

The national characteristics briefly, yet tellingly, touched upon in the remarks of Lord Salisbury and Mr. Disraeli, when in opposition, did not fail to be indicated in the policy that was to be pursued when they again came into office. At the general election, which had so auspicious a result, Mr. Disraeli, in addressing his old constituents of Buckinghamshire, took occasion to make a few brief allusions, significant as to the past, and most characteristic as to the policy it was his earnest desire and full determination to pursue in the new parliament. 'I have ever endeavoured,' Mr. Disraeli said, 'and if returned again to parliament I shall, whether in or out of office, continue to endeavour, to propose or support all measures calculated to improve the condition of the people of this kingdom. But I do not think this great end is advanced by incessant or harassing legislation. The cause of civil and religious liberty mainly depends upon the strength and stability of England. I ask you to return me to the House of Commons to resist every proposal which may impair that strength, and to support by every means her imperial sway.' The time soon came when he could act as First Minister of the Crown in the spirit of such remarks, not only in parliament, but in the councils of state. It was by no 'harassing legislation' that, during the first year of his administration, such useful measures as the Licensing, Factories, Rating, Church Discipline, Church Patronage (Scotland), and Endowed Schools Bills were satisfactorily passed; although the two last were called reactionary by the Liberals. In

the following session there were passed the government measures of Regimental Exchanges, Peace Preservation, Conspiracy, and Protection of Property, Artisans' Dwellings, Public Health, Friendly Societies, Agricultural Holdings, and Unseaworthy Ships Bills. In the session of 1876, the following measures were successfully disposed of:—Royal Titles Bill, conferring upon the Queen the additional title of Empress of India—though factiously opposed by the Liberals; Inclosure of Commons, Pollution of Rivers, Poor Law Amendment, Merchant Shipping, and Elementary Education. In the session of 1877 the following Acts were passed:—Prisons, Universities, Army Promotion and Retirement, South Africa, Justices' Clerks, and Canal Boats Acts; and this, notwithstanding the obstruction that the Irish Radicals began to set in motion, fanned by the responsible leaders of the Liberal opposition as a party, rather than being checked by them, as it was their duty to do. In the session of 1878, again, such more or less important Acts as the following were passed:—The Factory Act Consolidation, Increase of Bishoprics Act, Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act (for the security of our national live-stock against foreign infections); together with Irish Intermediate Education, Territorial Waters Jurisdiction, Highways, Epping Forest (for preserving its public rights), Scotch Education, and Scotch Roads and Bridges Acts. While in the last year of Mr. Disraeli's administration there were made these further important additions to the statute-book:—Army Discipline and Regulation Act, Prosecution of Offences, Summary Jurisdiction, Public Companies, University Education (Ireland), Amended Artisans' and Labourers' Dwellings Improvement, and Public Health (Interments) Acts. There was no 'sensational legislation' in any of these statutes, but they were solid, useful, practical measures; and we have thought it desirable to enumerate them here, if only in common justice to Lord Beaconsfield's memory, since so many unworthy attempts have been made to show that his administration failed to vigorously carry out any advantageous domestic policy. They are all, it cannot fairly or reasonably be disputed, practical measures of domestic legislation which were

designed, and have, we believe, been already proved, to be more or less highly conducive to the public weal; and, when brought forward in parliament, they commended themselves to the common sense of all classes of our countrymen, save only those whose strong political prejudices prevented them seeing anything good proceed from any political party but their own.

The foreign policy of the Conservative administration had, in the main, quite as cordially as its domestic policy, the ready concurrence of parliament; and it was in this that the ability, the sagacity, and the integrity of the government, as well as its unflinching patriotism, had to be the most severely tried and tested,—and this as a policy calculated to be conducive to our best interests as a nation, and which, whilst manfully upholding the national honour and prestige, sought substantially to promote the permanent peace, not of Europe only, but the whole civilised world, along with the maintenance of beneficial influences in our wide-spread colonial possessions and foreign dependencies, whose rest from excitement and commotion, and consequent progress and prosperity, are already found to contribute materially, not to our own national welfare and greatness alone, but to the advancement of the interests of civilization, of commerce, of industry, and, one would fain hope, however indirectly, of Christianity also, throughout the world at large.

This policy was developed and demonstrated by the Conservative government in various acts and deeds, all giving indications, in a greater or less degree, of public spirit, of patriotic feeling, and of political sagacity, which their general results, with but few and slight exceptions, have most remarkably and most happily attested. The purchase of the Suez Canal shares was one among the foremost of those courageous yet sagacious acts, which testified to the comprehensively beneficent character of such a policy. Another was the acquisition of the island of Cyprus, so important on several accounts to the defence of our due and most beneficial influence in the surrounding isles and territories, Asiatic not less than European, as well as in the Mediterranean itself; and which may happen to become

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an essential position for maintaining a ready, safe, and uninterrupted intercourse with our Indian Empire. Nor ought it to be overlooked what a further wise and prudent stroke of policy it was to proclaim Her Majesty Empress of India, and to arrange, on a seasonable and advantageous occasion, for the visit of the Prince of Wales to India—if not originally at the suggestion of Lord Beaconsfield himself, yet on his anxious and pressing advice—in order to represent his imperial and royal mother; and by his congenial converse, and the interchange of courtly civilities with the native princes, and others of influence and distinction in India, to cement more strongly the good feeling then happily subsisting between England and India.

The great question of all, however, because one that involved serious issues to Europe at large,—as well as to those more immediately concerned in it in particular,—was that 'Eastern Question,' which had already, and so recently, under a less careful and less skilful British administration than Lord Beaconsfield's, cost the country an enormous, and on every account a deplorable, sacrifice of blood and treasure, in that most lamentable Crimean war, which had so little to atone for it. Mr. Disraeli, it is true, in a flush of patriotic feeling of exultation at its memorable illustration of British valour at the very outset, was induced to say of that war: 'I think that what has occurred has shown that the acts of peace practised by a free people are not enervating. I think that the deeds that have been referred to, both by the commanders and the common soldiers, have shown that education has not a tendency to diminish, but to refine and raise the standard of the martial character. In these we may proudly recognise the might and prowess of a free and ancient people. These are all the circumstances and conditions that are favourable to our confidence in the progress of civilization, and flattering to the consciousness of every Englishman.'[1] Still it was that '*bellum, horridum bellum*,' which ought never to be aught but the deplorable exception with any civilised nation, and which, even as such an exception, incurs 'a fall of blood,' as Shakspeare has so forcibly expressed it,

[1] Speech in the House of Commons (vote of thanks to Allied Armies), Dec. 15, 1855.

'Whose guiltless drops
Are everyone a woe, a sore complaint
'Gainst him whose wrong gives edge unto the swords
That make such waste in brief mortality.'

But under the administration of Lord Beaconsfield we were happily spared all this, while yet that perilous question of the East was brought to a pacific solution and termination. Well prepared to fight no doubt we were; and it can scarcely now, one would think, be questioned that our being so prepared was the great cause of our going to war being averted, and of our all-important object being accomplished without there being shed one drop of British blood, most critical, most perilous though the ordeal was through which it had to be pursued. This was, and always had been, Mr. Disraeli's principle. To be prepared. *Si vis pacem, para bellum.* This was the motto inscribed on his standard, and his adhesion to which enabled him to carry out successfully his great policy at the perilous crisis of the Eastern Question. Yet those preparations for war in case of need, were the theme of most impolitic, most unpatriotic jeerings and railings by the jealous leaders of the Liberal party. The early summoning of parliament—its vote of credit for the government—the prompt and valiant response of the Reserve Forces to the call for their assistance, should it be required—the patriotic participation of our colonies in the national demonstration of military power—the bringing over to Malta the swarthy troops under British rule and command from India, to be in readiness in case of need, and who showed such alacrity to do their duty to the gracious Empress under whose flag they were proud to serve,—all this, wisely planned by Lord Beaconsfield and his colleagues, and skilfully arranged by their direction, most successfully answered its sagacious and merciful purpose, of enabling the government to put a stop to a cruel and devastating war, and submitting its causes to prudent and peaceful arbitration, without there having been found occasion to call for the shedding of one drop of the blood of our countrymen.

But, as we have shown, it was, though a glorious, yet a difficult

achievement, and this mainly, if not wholly owing to the Liberal party, with Mr. Gladstone at its head, and in a great measure at his instigation, harassing the ministry by dividing the nation, through their excited attacks upon and denunciations of the whole policy that Lord Beaconsfield's administration was judiciously and vigorously pursuing. It happened that, in quelling the insurrection which had broken out in the Turkish provinces, great cruelties were perpetrated, chiefly by a number of Bashi-Bazouks. Details of the crimes committed were supplied to this country by a correspondent of the *Daily News*, and aroused a deep sensation. People were naturally horrified, and highly indignant, that inoffending women and children should have been subjected to tortures and to outrages, worse even than death. The excitement created was creditable to the humane instincts of the country; but it might have been attended with serious results, involving far more suffering and bloodshed, but for the calmness and moderation which the Premier displayed. Mr. Gladstone issued a sensational pamphlet on 'Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East,' in which he urged the public to require the extinction of the Turkish Executive in Bulgaria, and spoke of the relief which would thereby be afforded to the 'over-charged emotions of a shuddering world.' 'Let the Turks,' he said, 'now carry away their abuses in the only possible manner, namely, by carrying off themselves, their Zaptiehs and their Mudirs, their Bimbashis and their Yuzbachis, their Kaimakams and their Pashas; one and all, bag and baggage, shall, I hope, clear out from the province they have desolated and profaned.' Dexterously he attempted to turn the anti-Turkish excitement against the ministry by alleging that they had been remiss when they ought to have been active; and the consequence of all this was, that whilst the ministry, true to our treaty obligations, were attempting, in union with the other powers, to effect a peaceful settlement, the Liberal party were agitating for active measures against Turkey, and condemning the government for the support which it was alleged to have given to the Turks by the dispatch of the fleet to Besika Bay.

Speaking at Aylesbury, at a meeting of the Bucks. Agricultural Society (September, 1876), the Premier delivered a scathing rebuke to those who had thus attempted to alienate from the government the sympathy and support of the public at a moment when union and hearty co-operation might have been attended with the happiest results. He said the Secretary of State had been attempting to accomplish two most important ends—to secure permanent British interests of the highest importance, and to maintain the European peace. Under ordinary circumstances, a ministry aiming at such great results would have been unanimously upheld by the country; but it was useless to deny that in this instance the attention of the public had been directed to extraneous matters, and some had been led to arrive at conclusions which would, if carried into effect, be fatal to peace. The people of England were an enthusiastic people. There were others more exciteable, but there were none so enthusiastic. When that enthusiasm was excited in a right object, one upon which the country was clearly informed, and could direct its energies to a practical end, that enthusiasm was the finest force that any ministry could possibly possess. The danger at such a moment was that designing politicians might take advantage of sublime sentiments and apply them for the furtherance of their sinister ends. He did not think there was any language that could denounce too strongly conduct of that description; and, he added, with telling effect, 'He who at such a moment would avail himself of such a commanding sentiment in order to obtain his own individual ends by a course which he knows, or may know, to be injurious to the interests of his country, and not favourable to the welfare of mankind, is one whose conduct language cannot too strongly condemn. It outrages the principle of patriotism, which is the soul of free communities. It does more than this, it influences in the most injurious manner the common welfare of humanity; and, if it be pursued by any man at this moment, it ought to be indignantly condemned by the people of England; for, in the general havoc and ruin which it may accomplish, it may, I think, be described as worse than any of those Bulgarian atrocities of which we

have heard so much.' Having pointed out how effectively and wisely the mediatorial influence of England had been exercised in securing an armistice and paving the way for a permanent peace, Lord Beaconsfield reverted to the wild and visionary schemes of those who would drive out the Turk, 'bag and baggage' from Europe, and plunge us into a war of no slight duration, to accomplish that design. 'The gentlemen,' he said, 'who propose such wild schemes for driving a great race, a numerous race, from Europe, and founding governments of an independent character, should, I think, take example from a distinguished man of the day, whose conduct and opinions influence us all—Mr. Gladstone himself.' And, amid mingled laughter and cheers, he thus continued:—'Mr. Gladstone wrote a pamphlet. (Much laughter.) The time may come when he may regret having done so (laughter); but in that pamphlet he denounced and described the Turkish race as a brutal race, not adapted to our climate, and which ought to be expelled from Europe. Well, two or three days after that, Mr. Gladstone became humanitarian. Politicians do not always look before they leap. In a magnanimous manner, feeling that he had made a mistake, he said he did not mean the expulsion of the Turkish nation, but only of the Turkish ministers. (Cheers and laughter.) I have no doubt Mr. Gladstone did not mean the expulsion of the Turkish nation; but, in regard to the Turkish ministers, I doubt whether they were Turks. But, preposterous as the notions are which have been expressed, it is impossible that we could come to a sudden settlement which should involve the turning of all the Turks out of Europe. The sending out of a million of Moors and Jews from Spain a good many years since so convulsed that nation, that it has never recovered it, and Europe suffers even at this moment from that attempt. ('Hear, hear.') I am convinced that Mr. Gladstone, on reflection, never intended anything of that kind. If he had proposed that the House of Commons with the Speaker at their head should go down to Greenwich fair, and all roll down from the top of Greenwich Hill (much laughter), he could not have proposed anything more decidedly incongruous. (Loud laughter and cheers.)' How wise and appropriate such

comments were, a little calm reflection will convince anyone. The party from whom those wild schemes emanated which called forth Lord Beaconsfield's reprehension have had experience since then of the difficulty of governing the refractory part of a nation,—a part much smaller, and altogether more insignificant, numerically and financially, than Turkey is. If it is difficult to govern the disaffected portion of a country like Ireland, how much more difficult and dangerous must it be to expel a nation like Turkey! The task would be Herculean, and give rise to scenes of carnage which it is horrible to contemplate. And yet, strange though it may seem, the expulsion of the Turks was recommended by some as desirable and easy, and a proposal, impracticable and terrible in its consequences, was dignified with the name of 'a policy.' It would have been more correct to describe it as 'a dream,' for it could not possibly be looked upon as a 'policy' which a Christian country could attempt for a moment to advocate and to enforce.

The speech of Lord Beaconsfield, so caustic and so severe, and yet so full of calm common sense—a quality much needed in a time of wildness and uproar—had a beneficial effect in leading thoughtful men to wonder whether they were not asked by the Liberals to chase a phantom and to place themselves in a position of gross absurdity. We are more indebted than we can define to Lord Beaconsfield for having by his stolidity and calmness at such a crisis prevented us drifting nobody knows whither; but at all events into a dreadful war—attempting, as Lord Derby expressed it, 'without an ally, and possibly with at least one European opponent, to undo by force our own work of twenty years ago, with all Europe perplexed at the suddenness of the change, and probably with every continental politician ascribing to us some deep and incomprehensible plan of national aggrandisement.' Thus, within a comparatively brief period, the same Liberal party were the advocates of war for two results diametrically opposed. Lord Beaconsfield could not prevent the Crimean war in defence of Turkey, but he saved us from a wild crusade against the Turks, the disastrous effects of which we should

have been severely feeling at the present moment. At the same time that we were saved from committing a grievous and irretrievable error, the condition of the Turkish provinces and of the Christian populations, about which so much was said, did not escape notice. In his famous speech at the Guildhall, on Lord Mayor's Day (1876), Lord Beaconsfield described fully all that had been done, and referred hopefully to the armistice which had been concluded, and the conference which was impending. It was in this same speech that he alluded to the determination of the country, under his guidance, to adhere to treaty obligations, and to do that which was just, fearless of all consequences. 'The Lord Mayor,' he said, 'has told us that England is the country of all others whose policy is peace. We have nothing to gain by war; we are essentially a non-aggressive power. There are no cities and no provinces that we desire to appropriate. We have built up an empire of which we are proud, and our proudest boast is this—that this empire subsists as much upon sympathy as upon force. But if the struggle comes, it should also be recollected that there is no country so prepared for war as is England, because there is no country whose resources are so great in a righteous cause; and I trust that England will never embark in war, except in a righteous cause—a cause that concerns her liberty, her independence, or her empire. England is not a country which will have to enquire whether she can enter into a second or third campaign. She will commence the fight that will not end until right is done'—an announcement that was received with great enthusiasm by the distinguished assemblage to which it was addressed.

In Liberal circles these remarks were considered as inflated and inflammatory; though why they should have been resented by men who were not averse to a war, if only it could be directed against Turkey, it is difficult to conceive. For the gist of them was a declaration that England was well prepared for emergencies, and capable of conducting a campaign with spirit and energy. 'The best way to preserve peace is to be prepared for war,' and by

showing the preparedness of the country, Lord Beaconsfield's address was well-timed, and had a pacific influence throughout Europe, since it let the world know that England meant to look after her own interests, and to see that the principles of justice were not trampled under foot.

In December (1876) a conference assembled at Constantinople. Lord Salisbury represented England, and did his best to promote a peaceful solution of the difficulty. His task, however, was not an easy one. Before the conference, Russia had concentrated her forces at Kischeneff, and a demonstration against Turkey equally warlike, though with the tongue and not with the sword, had been made by the Liberal party in England at a 'national conference' at St. James's Hall. At this conference much abuse of Turkey was indulged in, one speaker declaring it 'the most detestable government that had ever afflicted mankind;' while Mr. Gladstone maintained it was our duty to assist the insurrectionary provinces. 'It is our business,' he said, 'to acknowledge the obligation, to take part in the burden; and it is our privilege to claim for our country a share in the honour and fame.' England thus presented the appearance of a house divided against itself, and continental statesmen could not make up their minds whether the feeling of the country supported the ministers in their attitude of armed neutrality, or sided with the more clamorous politicians who manifested such anti-Turkish proclivities. The object of the ministry, as stated in the Queen's speech, was 'to maintain the peace of Europe, and to bring about the better government of the disturbed provinces without infringing upon the independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire.' But there were obstacles in the way which prevented the realisation of these laudable schemes. The conference at Constantinople broke up without effecting a settlement; and in April, 1877, Russia, who had been all along making ready, declared, war against Turkey in the interest of the Christians —and of herself. The Liberals did not conceal their gratification at Russia's proceedings, and were loud in their praises of Holy Russia, who had undertaken such a glorious crusade. Many of them would

have had England plunge into the whirlpool side by side with Russia, but Lord Beaconsfield plainly intimated that he was not to be entrapped into any action of so foolish a nature. The government would preserve an attitude of strict neutrality so long as our interests were not endangered; and, as the Emperor of Russia had affirmed he had no object but that of aiding the oppressed, it was not likely we should be called upon to oppose him.

At the Mansion House on Lord Mayor's Day, 1877, Lord Beaconsfield replied with great force to those who were not content with England's calm and watchful attitude. During the debates in parliament Mr. Gladstone had been very eloquent in his applause of the Russians, and very earnest in his efforts to lure the government into joint action with them. In concluding one of his impassioned speeches, he said, in language replete with the eloquence of an orator, but not with the prudence of a statesman: 'If Russia should fail, her failure would be a disaster to mankind, and the condition of the suffering races for whom we are supposed to have laboured would be worse than before. If she succeeds, and if her conduct be honourable; nay, even if it be but tolerably prudent, the performance of the work she has in hand will, notwithstanding all your jealousies and all your reproaches, secure for her an undying fame. When that work shall be accomplished, though it be not in the way and by the means I would have chosen, as an Englishman I shall hide my head, but as a man I shall rejoice. Nevertheless, to my latest day I will exclaim, Would God that in this crisis the voice of the nation had been suffered to prevail; would God that in this great, this holy deed, England had not been refused a share!'

All this was very high-sounding and very grandiloquent, but as we recall it now in the light of all that has since transpired, with Russia's fame rather lessened than increased, and Mr. Gladstone's head not hidden, but held higher than ever, we cannot but feel thankful that Lord Beaconsfield should have been astute enough to resist, and strong enough to overcome, the attempts that were made to beguile him from the path of neutrality. In his speech on Lord

Mayor's Day, he firmly maintained that a neutral attitude, whatever might be said to the contrary, was the right one, and that it was not conducive either to the honour or the interests of England to take any part in the contest. On no account would ministers swerve from their neutral policy unless British interests were assailed or menaced. 'Cosmopolitan critics,' he said, 'men who are the friends of every country save their own, have denounced this policy as a selfish policy. My Lord Mayor, it is as selfish as patriotism. But it is the policy of her Majesty's government, and it is a policy which they believe the people of this country have sanctioned and approved.' Meanwhile the war was progressing rapidly, and the Russians, with their overpowering numbers, were gaining the mastery. In December, Plevna surrendered after a gallant defence, and the Russians, in strong force, marched on towards Constantinople. With their victory assured, and Constantinople within their reach, the crisis arrived in which action on the part of this country became imperative. What that action was we must reserve for another chapter, for the events of 1878 were historically so important that they deserve careful narration.

We have been calling the distinguished subject of our memoir, throughout the last few pages, not, as before, Mr. Disraeli, but what he then had become, Lord Beaconsfield—an elevation in social rank which we have been prevented by other and interrupting incidents from conveniently intimating at the precise period of its occurrence. It was an elevation, we would now remark, that was at the time both sudden and unexpected,—though no doubt one that at no distant period would have taken place as a matter of course. It was hastened, we believe, by the kindly and considerate anxieties of friends, lest Mr. Disraeli's longer continuance in the House of Commons, occasioning, as it did, together with untimely hours, exciting altercations, and sometimes rude buffetings—from which he would be exempt in the House of Lords—might have so deleterious an effect on his health, as to result in incapacitating him for active official life. He left the House of Commons one evening rather hastily,

after making a short but emphatic speech denying and denouncing the grossly exaggerated statements of 'Bulgarian Atrocities,' which were being constantly reiterated. 'Mr. Disraeli got up from his seat,' said the account, 'went out, and never again returned to the House of Commons as one of its members.' Next morning, with the *profanum vulgus*, it became a sort of 'nine days' wonder,' when announced that Mr. Disraeli was raised to the peerage as the Earl of Beaconsfield.

In a farewell address to the constituency of Buckinghamshire, which he had represented in the Commons for so many years, his lordship referred thus explicitly and truthfully to the objects which he had attempted during his long career as a public servant to carry into effect:—'Throughout my public life I have aimed at two chief results. Not insensible to the principle of progress, I have endeavoured to reconcile change with that respect for tradition which is one of the main elements of our social strength; and in external affairs I have endeavoured to develop and strengthen our empire, believing that a combination of achievement and responsibility elevates the character and condition of a people.' This was a noble declaration for a minister to be able to make, and the recollection of a life spent in such a worthy manner could not but be highly consolatory and gratifying as the end of it drew nigh. Would that there were many more animated by such excellent principles and inspired by such lofty aspirations for the public good!

CHAPTER XXX.

AN ANXIOUS YEAR.

Thus far our fortune keeps an upward course,
And we are graced with wreaths of victory.—*Shakespeare.*

THE year 1878 was for Lord Beaconsfield and his colleagues a time of unparalleled anxiety, as it was also one of unequalled triumph. The Turks, though they had fought with great bravery, had been overthrown; and the Russians stood, so far at least as Turkish resistance was concerned, completely masters of the situation. The much-coveted capital of Constantinople lay within their reach, and there was an immediate fear lest, intoxicated with their success, they should endeavour to seize upon those positions which would give them a preponderating power, and be a constant menace to English interests and to the peace of the world. Diplomacy having been unable to avert the war, had now to be called into action to prevent Russia, whose ostensible object had been the defence of the Christians, from accomplishing her real object—the acquirement of additional influence and territory to such an extent as to interfere prejudicially with England's position and prestige. Should diplomacy fail, there was but one awful alternative—a great war.

This was the anxious problem that awaited solution when the year 1878 opened; and, deeply impressed with the critical nature of the situation, Lord Beaconsfield had parliament summoned at an earlier period than usual. In the Queen's speech the events which had transpired were briefly sketched, and reference was made to the fact that negotiations for a treaty of peace were proceeding between Russia and Turkey. An armistice had been concluded between the contending parties; and Turkey, seeing no active help forthcoming, had shown a disposition to throw herself into the arms of her foe.

Server Pasha had informed the representatives of England and Austria that 'the European powers would have no just ground of complaint if Turkey consulted her own interests exclusively; and that, if necessary, the Porte was ready to sacrifice one-half of the empire in order to save the other half.' In reply to these statements, the Porte was informed that England and Austria would not recognise any arrangement made in contravention of the treaties of 1856 and 1871 without the participation of the guaranteeing powers; thus indicating clearly that they were alive to the impending danger, and were determined to cope with it. In the Queen's speech parliament was informed that measures of precaution might be rendered necessary; and Lord Beaconsfield, in the course of his address, spoke out in a way that could not be misunderstood. In replying to the criticisms of Lord Granville, he said: 'I believe this country thoroughly understands what are British interests, and will support the government if they find it necessary to apply for supplies to secure those British interests. I do not think that he has at all succeeded in establishing his position that this country is in a state of isolation. I believe England is in a position of which she has no need to be ashamed. I believe that in the councils of Europe the influence of England is great, and God grant that in the course of these negotiations it may become greater. And if it does become greater, I, on the part of the government, divided though we are said to be in the cabinet, feel that I am expressing their unanimous sentiment when I say that influence will be exercised for the greatest interests of humanity. It will be exercised for the termination of all these hostilities. It will be used in every way for procuring a peace which will be stable and endurable; but if we are called on to vindicate the rights and to defend the interests of this country, if all our present hopes and prospects are disappointed, if circumstances require a demand to parliament again and again in order to obtain means to vindicate the honour of the realm, and to preserve and maintain the interests of the empire, I am sure the government will never hesitate to adopt that course.' (Cheers.)

The peace negotiations between Russia and Turkey progressed so slowly during January, and were attended with so much uncertainty and suspicion, that the ministry felt it prudent to prepare for the worst. Notice was therefore given in the House of Commons of an intention to ask for a vote of credit; and when the Chancellor of the Exchequer rose to move that the vote be granted, the House was crowded to excess. The right hon. gentleman explained that, while peace was signed, Russia had the right to advance; and when they saw her moving towards Constantinople they could not feel free from anxiety. In reply to an inquiry as to the intentions of the Emperor, Prince Gortschakoff said there was no intention of directing military operations on Gallipoli, 'unless the Turkish regular forces should concentrate there;' but it so happened that the Turkish forces were moving in that direction. In this crisis the ministry decided upon sending the fleet to the Dardanelles (a decision which led to the retirement of Lord Carnarvon), but subsequent assurances of a more peaceful character warranted them in recalling it. They did not, however, withdraw the demand for a vote of credit, feeling urgently the need of being abundantly prepared for action, should action unfortunately become imperative. 'I think you are about to take a wise course,' said a distinguished foreigner to Sir Stafford Northcote, 'and one which will be advantageous to the interests of Europe. We all want to be taught a lesson of prudence, and no one will be listened to unless he is strong.'

We need not enter here into lengthy details of the discussion which took place in the Commons, or of the wild opposition of some Liberals to a measure of which common prudence and common sense alike dictated the necessity. Suffice it to say that, by a majority of two hundred and four, the much-abused vote of six millions was given to the ministry. The majority was large, but not surprisingly so. To those who had followed closely the course of the debate, it had been evident all along that the opposition was melting away under the blaze of the fresh information that came from the theatre of war. One by one the arguments of the anti-vote orators were being over-

whelmingly answered by the batches of startling news from abroad. The advance of the Russians close upon Constantinople, the outbreak of a malignant war fever in Greece, the unaccountable delay in the armistice, the assertion that Russia designed to possess herself of the Turkish fleet, and other particulars, proved that if this country had any concern in eastern affairs she must be prepared to manifest it. Nor were occurrences abroad the only circumstances that dried up the stream of opposition. At home the feeling of the country began to appear with unmistakable significance. The votes that were taken all over England in favour of the six millions were not those of one party alone, but of Liberals and Conservatives combined. The demonstration of students, the earnest resolutions passed by meetings of merchants, and other similar manifestations, could not be regarded as being dictated so much by political as by national sentiments. Hence it was that they carried with them a weight which made itself felt, and which exercised a powerful influence in supporting the action of the ministry. The scenes which followed in the House were somewhat extraordinary, and naturally enough constituted the great topic of conversation in almost every circle. The withdrawal of the amendment, after so much ingenuity and pains had been taken to bolster it up, was, to say the least of it, a novel procedure. It was at one movement scattering to the winds all the labour of the numerous speakers who had tried for several nights to impress the Commons with a due sense of its value. The unfortunate amendment, having been deserted by its parents, the House went into Committee of Supply. A renewed attack, notably by Mr. Gladstone, who spoke for an hour, was made upon the vote, and was succeeded, strangely enough, not by a determination to fight the question out, but by a hasty movement to the rear. A contemporary writer thus describes the retreat:—'The House clamoured for a division; the question was put by the Chairman, and a tremendous shout of "No" compelled him to order a division. At this point the Liberal chiefs who had not already disappeared walked out of the House, amid boisterous applause on one side and derisive cheers from the other.

This incident over, honourable members, as on the previous evening, took their several ways, and for some minutes left the battle-field unoccupied. The tellers were not long in performing their duty. They advanced to the table; the government whip received a paper; and, amid a silence startling by contrast, read out: 'Ayes, to the right, 328; Noes, to the left, 124.' Then burst forth such cheering as St. Stephen's has seldom heard; for at last, after more than a week of talk, government had got their money.' Being of the number of those who believe that national questions should be regarded from a national, and not from a political standpoint, we cannot but think that the vote was neither inopportune or unnecessary. It was a matter of national concern that the ministry should show themselves keenly alive to the progress of affairs in this crisis, and that they should let Russia understand that, whilst they would act and hope for the best, if the worst should come the country would not be unprepared for it. The argument that the vote was inopportune was founded mainly upon the fact that it came on the eve of peace. There were speakers who asked why the six millions should be laid aside for war purposes at the very moment that the belligerents were terminating an armistice. The parties who used this somewhat plausible weapon to deal a blow at the vote had apparently forgotten that with the armistice would come the crisis, so far as English interests were concerned. Whilst Russia and Turkey were tearing each other to pieces, they were not infringing English territory, or endangering English possessions. It was only when the 'unspeakable' Turk had been driven to the last extremity, and when the victorious eagle began to claim the reward of his work that English interests were involved. Lord Derby had asserted that we should look with disfavour on the Russian possession of Constantinople. Would he reiterate this statement, and would he interfere if the Emperor broke his word and went there? This was the question which arose when the Russians came within reach of Constantinople, and it was one they were anxiously considering amongst themselves. Whilst they were debating whether they should push matters to extremities, the

House of Commons was discussing a war vote; and that vote was carried by a vast majority. Was that likely or was it unlikely to have any influence in abating Russian greediness? In the course of the observations with which Mr. Bright favoured the House, there occurred an expression to the effect that it was absurd to go into a peaceful conference with shotted guns; and the ministry were urged in several quarters to allow moral force to suffice. It had to be remembered, however, that there were no other European nations who could be found to act upon this principle; there were no nations who would do away with their armaments, and trust to the justice of their cause. On the contrary, deplorable though it might be, it was a plain fact that in recent years the tendency had been to increase rather than reduce military power. France, Germany, Austria, and Russia were armed to the teeth. They would be at the conference with shotted guns; and what if we should go without, trusting to moral force, and substituting for the sword and the gun a broad-brimmed hat and an umbrella? We might have been publicly applauded as a peace-loving people, but secretly we should have been swindled and laughed at for our pains.

At the end of January the armistice was concluded, but the Russians continued to mass their troops in front of the Constantinople lines. On the 6th of February, Mr. Layard announced that the Russians had occupied Tchataldja in force, and that the Turks had been compelled to withdraw, leaving Constantinople entirely undefended. But Russia, in the face of Lord Beaconsfield's stern, unbending attitude, refrained from seizing the prize. They saw that they had already pushed affairs to a dangerous extremity. Austria was thoroughly aroused, and England was showing something like a united and determined front. The British fleet had again advanced within easy distance of Constantinople; and Lord Derby had plainly declared that there was no justification for the Russian entry into that celebrated city. The clever move on the diplomatic board, by which Prince Gortschakoff attempted to push on the troops, under cover of the pretence that they would go into Constantinople to

'protect Christian subjects,' did not answer. It was very ingenious, and a skilful Russian device; but the game of 'protecting Christians' to further ambitious ends, was getting played out. It was not very creditable to the good sense of Europe that it should have lasted so long. It did not say much for the foresight of skilled politicians that they should only just have begun to see through it, and to realise its meaning; but it had become transparent at last, and could not be of use any longer. Lord Derby did not hesitate to declare that the proposal was not such as could be sanctioned without protest. In a firm despatch to Prince Gortschakoff, he pointed out that there was no comparison between the entry of victorious troops into an enemy's capital and the approach of the vessels of a neutral power. One would be destined to arouse passion, the other to allay it; one would be calculated to preserve order, the other to disturb it. The Christians, about whom the Russians were so anxious, would be endangered directly the troops entered, and thus, taking Prince Gortschakoff at his word, he would be defeating his own ends. The Russians were not able to answer Lord Derby's protest, and they saw that, unless they meant to fight England, they must stop. They had reached the limit where diplomacy ended and blows began. In this critical dilemma they wisely regarded discretion as the better part of valour, and held aloof from taking possession of the much-coveted city.

No one could read a description of the state of the Turkish provinces at this crisis without a shudder, and without feeling that the existence of such horrors was neither more nor less than a standing disgrace to humanity. The correspondent of the *Daily News*, the journal which gave us the details of the Turkish atrocities, declared that no one, except those who could witness the scenes between Philippopolis and Hermanli, could form even a faint idea of the 'diabolical drama.' 'The retreat of the Mussulman population of Roumelia,' he wrote, 'exceeds in horror the story of the French retreat from Moscow, or any other episode of "glorious war" which the annals of this century, at least, contain. . . . . Seventy

miles of utter desolation; seventy long miles strewn with the household effects of many thousand families; seventy weary miles of a continuous ghastly, sickening panorama of death in every form, and in its most terrible aspect;—such is the road from Philippopolis to Hermanli.' And then he went on to give details of the shocking sights he had witnessed. We do not care to reproduce the most harrowing particulars, but one paragraph will give some idea of the nature of his despatch. He says:—

'The scene was at once so unique in its general aspect; so terribly impressive; so eloquent of suffering and disaster to innocent people, that I hesitate to attempt a description of it. Hundreds of acres were covered with household goods. All along the river-bank, following the windings of the road, over the hill, and across the fields, where the road makes a sharp turn, reaches this bivouac—at least three miles in extent, and of varying width. Over this great tract, the Arabas were standing as closely as they could, with their oxen placed together. The frames of the carts were in most cases broken to pieces; sick cattle wandered listlessly about among the wheels. Corpses of men, women, and children lay about near every Araba, and the whole ground was carpeted with clothing, kitchen utensils, books, and bedding. It was a pitiable sight to see an old grey-bearded Turk laying with his open Koran beside him, splashed with blood from ghastly gashes in his bared throat. Bundles of rags and clothes nearly all held dead babies. Crowds of Bulgarians swarmed in this great avenue of death and desolation, choosing the best of the carts, and carrying away great loads of copper vessels, which lay about in profusion, and mud-soiled bedding, with no more respect for the dead than for the rags they lay on. These scavengers would drive their carts across the heads of dead women and old men, without even a glance of curiosity at the bodies.'

It was truly high time the work of wholesale massacre should come to an end, and that Russia should speedily consent to finish her 'great and holy' task of relieving the Christian subjects of the Turkish provinces.

On the 4th of March the Treaty of San Stefano was signed; and directly it was published to the world, it became evident that England could not consent to see such an extension of Russian power without a protest, and an effort to restrain the grasping requirements of the victors. In this emergency Lord Beaconsfield decided upon calling out the reserves, a step which led to the retirement of Lord Derby, though the wisdom of that step is now beyond question;

for, as a recent writer well puts it, 'in exact proportion to the development of a resolute purpose, was the manifestation of a desire on the part of Russia, notwithstanding blustering words and hectoring acts, to come to some species of agreement with the European powers.'[1] The next step, therefore, which the cabinet decided upon was of an equally resolute and determined character. In April, a detachment of Indian troops was ordered to Malta—a sagacious proceeding, reminding Russia that the extent of our resources, in case of need, could not be readily measured, and must not be lost sight of. But the sagacity of the movement did not prevent another great outcry on the part of the Liberals, who denounced it as 'unconstitutional,' and tending to promote war.

Meanwhile, proposals for a conference of the great powers had been assuming a more definite shape; and, on the 3rd of June, Lord Salisbury was able to announce that a Congress had been decided upon, to meet at Berlin. Shortly after this welcome announcement, came the news that by an arrangement with Turkey, England had acquired the island of Cyprus, and had thus obtained a place of the greatest value should warlike measures for the protection of our high road to India ever be needful. The Congress assembled on the 13th of June, and was attended by Lords Beaconsfield and Salisbury, the former of whom was, during his stay in Berlin, decidedly the most popular of the statesmen in attendance. The attentions bestowed upon him were of the most flattering description, and the great weight of his influence made itself felt in all the deliberations in a way which could not have been equalled by any other English minister. The results of the Congress were thus summed up by a leading journal:—

'They constitute a peaceable triumph for the legitimate interests both of Europe at large, and of England in particular; and it is one of which this country may, on the whole, be justly proud. By firmness and foresight we have, without bloodshed, asserted our rights, and we have averted a great peril to our empire.'

If anything had been wanting to prove the reality, and, indeed,

[1] 'Cassell's History of the Russo-Turkish War,' Vol. II., p. 122.

the intensity, of the national feeling of pride and satisfaction at what the British Government had thus been so successful in accomplishing, it was amply and triumphantly supplied by the enthusiastic reception which the Earl of Beaconsfield and the Marquis of Salisbury, the British plenipotentiaries, met with on their return to London from Berlin. It was such a popular demonstration of national welcome, heartfelt congratulation, and political exultation, as had rarely, if ever, been witnessed in the streets of London. The writer of this was one of some thousands of excited spectators of the scene when the two noble lords arrived at the Charing Cross railway station, and he remembers well how their appearance, sitting side by side in an open chariot, as it emerged from the station, and proceeded down Parliament Street on its way to the official residence of the Premier, gave rise to a spontaneous outburst of popular joyfulness and jollity such as has seldom been beheld, on any political occasion, even in London. Nor was there anything to mar its joyousness, or detract from its significance. It was not only spontaneous, but unanimous; and the appreciation of it was not confined entirely to those who naturally, because so approvingly, had the deepest interest in its cause, and the greatest satisfaction with its display. It was a Liberal, not a Conservative journal, which in its issue the following morning thus genially, thus glowingly, could describe the exulting and imposing spectacle of the arrival, and the drive to Downing Street:—'Imagine,' says the graphic writer, 'a crimson covered gallery built up against the western wall of the station, and seeming to rise out of a bank of bloom, with here and there a palm or fern to serve as a foil to the splendour of colour. Fancy the lamp-posts made into things of beauty by spirals of flowers and leaves. Picture tall palms lifting their graceful forms from masses of flowers and ferns. Think of the platform bordered with flowers in beds. Imagine orange trees shedding around the light reflected from their lustrous green. When the bell announced the approach of the train, the whole station, from the crimson gallery crowded with rank and fashion, to the farthest platform also crowded with

people, and to the highest hotel windows with their rows of heads, woke up to excited demonstrative life. Then, too, the usual exclamations indicative of relieved suspense were heard on every hand—nay, not the usual exclamations. People did not say to one another, referring to the train, "Here *she* comes;" nor, speaking of its passengers, "Here *they* come." The remark was, "Here *he* comes!" and there could be no mistake about the pronoun. As the train glided alongside the crimson platform every eye searched for *him*. Where was *he?* Eager eyes watched every open door, till at last a half-score equally eager hands were seen thrust forward to help the descent of a gentleman wearing a long grey travelling coat. "There he is!" Men started up, hats in hand, and pushed their way among the gathering, shouting mass on the platform, anxious for a nearer view of the noble earl, and hoping perhaps to grasp his hand. Ladies even went forward, under escort, with a like object, and it seemed at one time as though the reception would embarrass him by its exceeding warmth. As for the people on the platform, they surrounded and followed the chariot, cheering as they went, and passed through the archway. But their applause was only as a river which, rushing between its banks, becomes lost in the ocean. The huge multitude outside gave voice together, and swallowed up the stream of cheers on which floated into their sight the hero of the Berlin peace.'[1]

It was thus a 'madding crowd'—though certainly with no 'ignoble strife'—and one of imposing dimensions, that followed the ministers to their destination in Downing Street; and after they had alighted, and having bowed again and again their grateful acknowledgments to their gratified countrymen, had retired within doors, nothing would serve and satisfy the excited throng but a compliance with the reiterated call for the Premier and his congenial colleague, who at length made their appearance at an open window, amid uproarious applause; and Lord Beaconsfield having briefly, but with telling effect, addressed the crowd, reminding them that the message from Berlin was

[1] *Daily Telegraph.*

one of 'peace with honour'—a declaration which mightily increased the intensity of their plaudits—the two noble lords, again bowing their devoirs, once more retired, and the people gradually, and in the most orderly manner, dispersed. It was not one of the common London crowds, which generally contain only too large a proportion of those noisy, and worse than noisy because uncivil, fellow-subjects, who have earned the distinctive title of 'Roughs.' No; it was a crowd in great part consisting of respectable middle-class men, with a sprinkling of those higher up in the social scale, supplemented, almost unavoidably, by a slight indiscriminate admixture of the rough and ruder elements of all popular gatherings. But its happiest, its most gratifying quality, was that of its being an entirely voluntary and extemporary demonstration, and one, therefore, the significance of which was at once altogether unmistakable, and in every respect most gratifying.

On Saturday evening, 27th July, the Conservative members of the Houses of Lords and Commons gave a banquet in the Duke of Wellington's Riding School, to the British Plenipotentiaries—the Earl of Beaconsfield, K.G., and the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G. The Earl of Beaconsfield, in responding to his health, referred to his career, which, he said, was, like that of most public men in this country, one of change and vicissitude; but he had been sustained, as others had been sustained, even in the darkest fortunes of party, by the conviction that he possessed their confidence—he would say, their indulgent confidence; for in the long course of his public life that he had committed many mistakes was only too obvious a truth to touch upon. But that they had been indulgent there could be no doubt, for he was particularly—he hoped he might say so—mindful that it had been his lot to lead in either House of Parliament that great party for a longer period than had ever fallen to the lot of any statesman of that party. Then referring to the Berlin Treaty, he said: 'I share the conviction of our noble Chairman, that the result of our endeavours has been one which has been received with satisfaction by our country. But I am perfectly aware that that satis-

faction is not complete or unanimous, because I know well, that before forty-eight hours have passed, the martial hosts of opposition will be prepared to challenge what we have done, and to question the policy which we hope we have established. (Cheers and laughter.) It is difficult to describe the exact meaning of the charge which is brought against the Plenipotentiaries of the Queen, as it will be introduced into the House of Commons. Drawn, as it is, it appears at first sight, to be only a series of congratulatory regrets.' (Laughter and cheers.) Having then explained at some length the position of Eastern affairs, he concluded as follows:—'I am sorry to say that, though we taxed our brains and our thoughts to establish a policy which we think beneficial to the country, we have not satisfied those who are our critics. (Laughter.) I was astonished to learn that the Convention of Constantinople had been described as an insane convention. That is a strong epithet; but I don't pretend to be as competent a judge of insanity as the right hon. gentleman who used it. I won't say to the right hon. gentleman what I had occasion to say in the House of Lords this year, *Naviget Anticyram?* but I would put this issue to an intelligent jury—Which do you believe most likely to enter into an insane convention—a body of English gentlemen, honoured by the favour of their Sovereign, and the confidence of their fellow-subjects, managing your affairs for five years (I hope with prudence, and not altogether without success); or a sophistical rhetorician, inebriated with the exuberance of his own verbosity, and gifted with an egotistical imagination that can at all times command an interminable and inconsistent series of arguments to malign his opponents and glorify himself? (Laughter and cheers.) My lords and gentlemen, I leave the decision upon the convention to the parliament and people of England. (Cheers.) I believe that in that policy we have deeply laid the seeds of future welfare, not merely for England, but for Europe and Asia; and, confident that the policy which we have recommended is one which will be supported by the country, I, and those who work with me, can endure these attacks. I thank you once more for the manner you

have welcomed me to-day. I can tell you that these are the rewards of public life, which never pall. The sympathy of those who have known you long; who have worked with you long; who have the same opinions upon the policy which ought to be pursued in this great and ancient empire. These are satisfactions which no language can describe: full of cheer and consolation, and, under all circumstances, the highest reward that a public man can attain. The generous feeling which has prompted you to welcome myself and my colleague on our return to England confirms and strengthens us in our efforts to serve our country. (Cheers.) It is not merely that in thus welcoming us you encourage those who are doing their best for what they conceive to be the public interest, but you tell to Europe also that England is a grateful country, and that it knows how to appreciate the efforts of those of her public servants who have resolved to maintain, as far as they can, the Empire of Great Britain.' (Loud cheers.)

It was at the great gathering where this eloquent speech was delivered, that Lord Beaconsfield appeared for the first time in public wearing the order of the Garter, a distinction which had been conferred upon him, and which drew from the *Times* the following well-deserved comments:—

'Lord Beaconsfield's triumph has been crowned by, perhaps, the most conspicuous honour which it remained for her Majesty to bestow upon him. He was yesterday invested with the Order of the Garter. It will be remembered that a few months ago the same honour was offered to him, but that, with her Majesty's permission, it was declined. Lord Beaconsfield was then in the midst of the long struggle which he has since conducted to a successful issue; and, though the offer then made to him was equally gracious and discerning, he was considerate as well as prudent in waiting until the success of his policy was placed beyond the reach of adverse contingencies. Peace has now been secured—a peace which is honourable to the Queen and to the country—and her Majesty has done justice at once to the confidence she placed in the Premier, and to the distinguished services he has rendered, by renewing her offer, and insisting on its acceptance. The highest social distinction which could be bestowed by the Sovereign is thus added to the applause which Lord Beaconsfield has won from the country at large. It is, perhaps, the highest distinction of the kind which can be won by merit. The Knights of the Garter may not unfairly be regarded as the most distinguished order of chivalry in the word. In antiquity it

may occasionally be surpassed; but, from its limited number, and from the jealousy with which admittance among the order has been guarded, the honour has acquired an extraordinary value. Lord Beaconsfield has won his way to an exclusive society of about fifty members of whom about half consist of the great Sovereigns of Europe and other royal personages, and the remainder are selected from the greatest nobles of England. He remains Earl of Beaconsfield, and he would do ill to exchange the title for one nominally more dignified; but, as Knight of the Garter, he holds a place amid emperors, kings, and princes of the blood royal. It is an extraordinary honour; but by the general voice of his countrymen it will be acknowledged to have been not undeserved.'

That Mr. Disraeli had well earned his knighthood could not for a moment be reasonably questioned; and it needed but little reflection not only to satisfy, but to gratify the public at large with her Majesty's most graceful, as well as grateful act, in thus recognizing and rewarding his generally acknowledged public services,—services, too, that he still continued to render in the arduous and responsible position he was further called upon to occupy. His Indian policy at such a moment was itself worth the honour, if we were securely to retain in its integrity that great empire there which had been acquired through the patriotic enterprize of our forefathers. For Russia—but for that policy, presuming on the Liberal feeling of England as to India, how it cared not for intrigue and aggression in Afghanistan, or for the warnings against that intrusive power which the late Ameer, Shere Ali, communicated to the Indian government, —presuming, we say, on all this, Russia was on the point of getting a footing in that part of Asia which rendered it indispensable, for the safety of our Indian possessions to have a secure scientific Afghanistan frontier; and this Lord Beaconsfield's administration accomplished, — a frontier, however, which the counter current of Liberal policy that has been pursued by his successors in office has already done much to weaken and imperil.

With reference to these and other imperial objects which Lord Beaconsfield's ministry laboured patriotically to accomplish, an able delineator of the personal character and public services of his lordship has justly and forcibly remarked, 'The foreign and colonial policy pursued during his term of office was worthy of a mighty

and ancient nation. First and foremost we must place the purchase of the Suez Canal shares'—already noticed—'which helps to counteract the short-sightedness of Lord Palmerston, who looked askance at that great achievement of Mons. de Lesseps. All honour is due to that dauntless engineer; and England has shown how much she prizes the highway to India which his skill has made for us, by the price she has paid for it. This stroke of Lord Beaconsfield's, however, did not commend itself to the mind of Mr. Gladstone, and he did not cease to take up his parable against it, until forced to own the other day that it was a most profitable investment, already yielding a profit of over four millions. The annexation of the Fiji Islands was a sign that the government was not afraid of the extension of our imperial sway; and that was followed by the annexation of the Transvaal—which has now been so ingloriously surrendered—and a scheme for the confederation of South Africa, which would add to our empire "a company of nations." The war in Zululand, now happilyter minated, was not sought by the Home government; but, despite the strain upon our resources, and the sad and irreparable losses which it occasioned, the sequence of events showed that Sir Bartle Frere had not over-estimated the "military machine" which lay like an incubus upon our fellow colonists; and history may view with a calmness and impartiality, which in moments of excitement are more difficult to be maintained, the conduct of her Majesty's representative at that critical juncture, and the chivalrous gallantry of our noble troops.'[1] The writer then alludes to the Eastern Question and the Afghan War—which we have already noticed—as further evidences of the wise and prudent policy of the 'Patriot Premier'—a policy which, as he says, was ratified again and again by substantial majorities in parliament, and by the approving voice of the nation. Greater and surer indications of the support of the country, and of the empire at large, could not have been desired. London conferred upon his lordship the freedom of the city, while congratulatory telegrams poured in from the British colonies, and notably from Australia.

[1] 'Earl Beaconsfield: A Sketch.' By F. A. Hyndman, of the Inner Temple, Barrister-at-Law.

Still the Liberal party had neither the justice nor the generosity to acknowledge what had been done—and done so well—in the interests of the nation's peace, and the nation's honour. It was scarcely, indeed, to be expected that the party could have any such grateful or such magnanimous feeling as must prompt it so to do, after the unsparing efforts it had, with such bitter enmity, employed to confound and defeat, if not to defame and dishonour him. His own party, of course,—for certainly it had great cause so to do,—not only deeply appreciated and gratefully applauded his splendid statesmanship, and his energetic services, but felt, if possible, prouder of him as its valiant and sagacious leader, than it had ever done before. And no section of that great national party evinced more anxiety to give assurance to Lord Beaconsfield of its gratitude and its esteem, than that influential and interesting one that is composed of the trading, the mechanic, and other industrious and enterprising classes of our countrymen, and whose organization in Conservative associations throughout the country now form such important moral bulwarks of the British constitution in its entirety and integrity. A combined deputation from those associations—one of the largest deputations to ministers of the crown ever remembered, and one representing many tens of thousands of their worthy fellows—waited by appointment on Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury, at the Foreign Office, to present them with addresses of gratulation and gratitude from their several constituencies in the provinces. And in thankfully replying to so proud a presentation, conveying, as it did, such assurances of devotion to the Conservative cause, Lord Beaconsfield took occasion thus opportunely to remind and compliment them as to the practical value, in operation, of such political organizations:—'Nature is herself,' he observed, 'organization. And if there were not organization, that great directing force which controls, and guides, and manages everything, you would have nothing but volcanoes, and earthquakes, and deluges. And so it is in the conduct of public life also. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that—having created this great organized party, having such a command

over the population of these counties that you can return a majority to parliament—you should lose no opportunity of inculcating on your friends the right principles upon which your conviction is founded, and the great object which you attempt to accomplish by thus combining together. I must say one word on working-men's associations, because I favoured them from the beginning, and always had confidence in their future. They have been subjected, as many have been in their infancy, to taunts about their character and ends. I have been asked often, "Why should a working man be a Conservative?" Of all men the working man is one who should be most Conservative. The working man of England,—as I say often, and shall often have occasion to repeat—I cannot say it too often,—the working man of England has an inheritance of civil rights which does not exist in any other country. My object is to impress upon you that organization is absolutely essential — that organization is perfectly consistent with the highest sentiment of patriotism; and although you may act under the influence of the most excited feeling at times, there is no reason why you should for a moment relinquish your discipline. It is for you, as I said before—the assembled officers of the great constitutional army of England—it is for you to feel convinced of these views, which I am now very slightly and imperfectly expressing to you. I look upon it at this moment that the great advantage that should be cultivated in this country, and especially by the working classes, is the maintenance of the British Empire. None are more deeply interested in the maintenance of that empire than the great body of the people. So long as that empire is maintained, it is in the power of any Englishman, if he thinks fit, to seek under every different clime—I may say now in every portion of the globe—an opening for his energy, a career of utility and profit to himself, and yet with the consolatory satisfaction that he still hears his mother tongue, and is still subject to the laws of his country, and with none of those ties that bind him to "sweet home" at all broken or weakened. Therefore, I believe we shall always find in the great body of the people of this country a deep sympathy with

those imperial rights which have elevated this country to so great a position in the world.' No wonder Lord Beaconsfield won the hearts and converted the minds of working men whenever they had the privilege of coming in contact with him. 'And what a contrast, morally as well as politically, is not such a speech to them as that we have here quoted, to any of the ordinary harangues of the popular and factious orators of the day—whether in Mid-Lothian or any where else!

But of all the addresses that the distinguished subject of our memoir—whether as Mr. Disraeli or as Lord Beaconsfield—had, in the course of his eventful career, to receive and reply to, none probably was more interesting, more significant, or more striking—as, certainly, none could be more honourable to either 'the giver or the receiver'—than a very remarkable one he received soon after his triumphant return with Lord Salisbury from Berlin—the fame of his skill and his influence as a plenipotentiary at a European Congress, as well as of his sagacity and his bravery in the councils of state at home, having already resounded along the distant shores of the Pacific. It was an address all the way from California,—not, however, from Californians as citizens of the United States of America, but as British subjects living there, and cherishing, it is evident, even in that foreign and far-distant abode, an unquenchable love for their native land, and an honourable pride in its undying renown. True, if even they had been Anglo-Americans, it might have been all the same; for there are hundreds of thousands of such who yet can truly say, in the spirit-stirring lines of one of their adopted country's patriotic and high-souled poets,—

> 'Though ages long have pass'd
> Since our fathers left their home,
> Their pilot in the blast
> O'er untravell'd seas to roam,
> Yet lives the blood of England in our veins!'

Yes: myriads there doubtless are, both on the Atlantic and Pacific shores of the American continent, who feel honoured by the consciousness that still 'there lives the blood of England in their veins,' and

that therefore they must needs warmly sympathise with England's imperishable fame, and the great deeds of her distinguished sons who so gloriously perpetuate it. And although they might not have the same direct interest in what had taken place as those had who still remained British subjects, yet that 'nameless fondness for our native clime,' which 'triumphs o'er change and all-devouring time,' might still have made it impossible for them ever to resist the influence of that sympathetic flame which they perceived to have been set aglow in every English bosom in their midst, by the grand achievement of the great statesman of their mother country, which had established 'peace with honour,' not in their own kingdom only, but among all the powers of Europe. And see what ardent expression these English Californians gave to their grateful acknowledgments of Lord Beaconsfield's services, and what a warm appreciation they displayed of his character and his achievements as a British statesman and British minister who had devoted a long public life in promoting the greatness and maintaining the honour of their common country. This memorable, and to all concerned most honourable, address was as follows:—

'To the Right Hon. the Earl of Beaconsfield, K.G.

'We, British residents of California, have the honour to approach your lordship with the expression of our high appreciation of the brilliant statesmanship evinced by you in the late European crisis. We have watched with interest and pride the successive triumphs which your lordship won for our beloved country; and we recognize that your far-seeing policy has elevated the national name, consolidated the empire, and caused Britons, however far removed, to feel that the tie which binds them to the mother country was never closer than now. When peace and war trembled in the balance, and the destinies of nations hung upon mighty issues, your lordship's wise counsels and firm attitude turned the scale, secured to Europe an honourable peace, assured civil and religious liberty to oppressed races, and inaugurated a reign of order and tranquillity where anarchy and oppression were rife. Another isle of historic fame is added to England's vast possessions; another gem sparkles in the diadem of our beloved Empress-Queen. These brilliant achievements justly entitle your lordship to the grateful homage of every true Briton's heart. We in California send glad greetings across the sea, and congratulate her most gracious Majesty and the British nation in having, during the late crisis, entrusted England's unsullied honour and unbounded resources to such worthy keeping. Long may your lordship continue at the head of

affairs, to wield your potent influence in the high interests of liberty and civilization! With respect and gratitude for the invaluable services rendered to our most gracious Queen and country, permit us to subscribe ourselves your lordship's faithful servants.'

This gratifying address from such distant shores was presented along with a beautiful and costly casket of Californian gold; and we need scarcely say with how much grateful pride and thankful acknowledgment it was eloquently replied to by Lord Beaconsfield. But whilst of those who had sent so far across, not the wide Atlantic Ocean only, but over the vast continent separating it from the still greater ocean, the Pacific, he spoke exultingly, as well as gratefully, he was becomingly modest and diffident in speaking of himself, and of anything he had done to call forth such cordial admiration and such generous praise. He was a statesman, he said, whose merit —perhaps it might be his only merit—was this, that he had always wished and always sought to maintain the honour and the interests of our great country. He regarded, he assured them, the settlement effected by the Treaty of Berlin as one that was eminently calculated, as it was honestly designed, to secure the pacification of Europe, if not also to promote the progress of civilization. It was, he trusted they would believe, no patched-up affair; nor was it characterized by partiality on one side or the other, but was designed to operate justly and fairly towards all whom it would affect, under the various conflicting circumstances that had to be taken into account. It could not humiliate any Power,—or, at any rate, it was far from its intention so to do. Its great end and aim was peace—European peace—which could only be effected by doing impartial and even-handed justice, and creating one common feeling of respect and goodwill. When he came to speak of Cyprus, it was evident the flattering allusions to it in the address had especially animated and cheered him. 'Gentlemen,' he said, with radiant smiles, and in a tone of excited joyousness, if not of conscious pride, 'the history of Cyprus is a romantic history. But in all its records I will venture to say that there is no incident so romantic as that furnished by a body of Englishmen working in the El Dorado—the real El Dorado they

have discovered—pursuing labours of so fascinating and absorbing a character as those which are pursued by my fellow-countrymen in California, who yet, amid all the excitement of their unparalleled life, can still pause and reflect upon the fortunes of the much-loved country which for a while they have quitted, and who, in this golden casket conveyed and offered to me this moment so gracefully by an interesting Californian youth, have shown how deeply and how anxiously they feel for those who are endeavouring to uphold the country which they so much love. What return, gentlemen, can I make for this beautiful, this valuable offering you have given me? *I cannot* send you golden caskets or emblazoned addresses like these I have just received; but *I can* send to you, which most heartily I do, sincerest gratitude and sympathy.' It was an address which, at its conclusion more particularly, was listened to with evident emotion by the Californian deputation; and we do not speak unadvisedly when we say, that manifest and affecting as the feeling naturally was in Lord Beaconsfield's presence, upon hearing such a deeply sympathetic assurance as was conveyed fall from his own lips, it would be fully equalled, whether in its reality or its intensity, when the same gracious greetings were afterwards so proudly and delightedly read, as we know they were, by patriotic and warm-hearted Englishmen in the flourishing and fashionable Californian cities of San Francisco and Sacramento, whose *golden casket* was so suitably and so significantly emblematic of the *golden opinions* they entertained of him it was sent to honour.

Before concluding this chapter, which has from its nature, and from the importance of the events of which it treats, necessarily had to include much of what his lordship said, as well as to describe what he did, we must make a brief reference to two other important speeches which he delivered, and which were in the main retrospective. At the Mansion House banquet, on Saturday, November 9th, 1878, Lord Beaconsfield responded to 'the health of Her Majesty's Ministers.' In the course of his speech, he referred to Eastern affairs; and showed clearly the necessity for a scientific frontier on

the north-west of our Indian empire. Speaking of the occupation of Cyprus, he said: 'Perhaps it will not be uninteresting to the citizens of London to learn that Cyprus will be no burden to this country, and that even this year, when the methods of England have partially—necessarily partially—been applied, it will furnish not merely the sum which we have annually secured to the Sultan, but the whole expenditure of its civil government.' . . . Alluding next to the Treaty of Berlin, he said: 'I know, my Lord Mayor, that it is said that the Treaty of Berlin already has proved to be inadequate to carry the results which it aimed at into operation. My Lord Mayor, if Congress matters which were settled at Berlin could have been settled in twenty-four hours, a Congress was unnecessary. They might have been settled by post, or by the Queen's messengers. Wherever a treaty has emanated from a great congress, it has always provided that a certain time should be allowed to carry the regulations into effect. The Treaty of Berlin is not different from other treaties in this respect.' He then went on to say that he would give credit to the signatories of the treaty for an honourable fulfilment of their engagements, though, he added: 'I admit that there are paragraphs in newspapers of a different import. I admit that there is gossip, which may not even be authentic, reported by the subalterns of different states, who may have expressed a different opinion; but the government of the world is carried on by sovereigns and statesmen, and not by anonymous paragraphs (cheers), or by the hare-brained chatter of irresponsible frivolity; and therefore, my lord, I look with confidence to the Treaty of Berlin being carried out completely in the period which the Congress provided for the completion of its arrangement; and I believe, that by carrying the treaty into effect, we shall secure and maintain an enduring peace in Europe. (Cheers.) . . . . That the state of affairs at present is serious, no one can doubt, because they must ever be serious when a great settlement is taking place, and is not yet accomplished; but I deny that they are affairs of danger. I know there are some who think that the power of England is on its wane. We have

been informed lately that our lot will be the lot of Genoa, Venice, and Holland; but, my Lord Mayor, there is a great difference between the condition of England and those picturesque and interesting communities. (Hear, hear.) We have, during ages of prosperity, created a nation of thirty-four millions, who are enjoying, and have long enjoyed, the two great blessings of civil life—justice and liberty. (Cheers.) My Lord Mayor, a nation of that character is more calculated to create empires than to give them up, and I feel confident that, if the English people prove themselves worthy of their ancestors—if England is true to herself—if they possess still the courage and determination of their forefathers, their honour will never be tarnished, and their power will never diminish.' (Cheers.)

At another banquet, a few months later—a banquet given by the Lord Mayor, on August 6th, 1879—his lordship was in a position to sum up thus accurately and proudly the results of his policy. He said:—'When I last had the honour of addressing your lordship on the Lord Mayor's Day to which you have just alluded, the affairs of our country seemed to wear a somewhat critical aspect. We were charged then by our opponents with having negotiated a treaty which was utterly impracticable; and, with the pretext of securing for our Indian empire an adequate and scientific frontier, we were about to embark this country in a war full of difficulty, and possibly of disaster. My Lord Mayor, the impracticable treaty has been carried into full effect; and, notwithstanding reiterated prophecies to the contrary, there is not, I believe, a Russian soldier on the dominion of the Sultan. The Emperor of Russia has fulfilled his engagements with honour and dignity (Hear, hear, and cheers); and is at this moment co-operating with the other powers of Europe in a policy the object of which is to secure and to maintain the general peace. (Cheers.) . . . . The Treaty of Berlin has taken its place among those capital monuments the object of which is to secure the general peace; and if dangers and difficulties arise in the country to which it particularly refers, I believe that in its provisions will be found resources adequate to any emergency. (Loud cheers.)

My Lord Mayor, you have reminded me that it was to the city of London that I first intimated the intention of Her Majesty's government to secure an adequate and a scientific frontier. It is satisfactory now to recall that that has been accomplished and achieved with a precision of plan, and a rapidity of execution, not easily equalled in the annals of statesmanship.' And thus, as he showed, two great objects had been successfully achieved in the interests of this country with a minimum of loss and a maximum of honour. In the one case we had secured a bloodless victory, and in the other we had created, at a small cost, a national safeguard which gave strength and security to our richest and proudest possessions. These were great and lasting results, and we venture to say there will be no page in British history more pleasing to British Conservatives than that on which is truthfully recorded the foreign policy of the Beaconsfield administration.

CHAPTER XXXI.

RITUAL IN THE CHURCH.

Every country should use such ceremonies as they think best to the setting forth of God's honour and glory, and to the reducing of the people to a most perfect and godly living without error or superstition.—*Book of Common Prayer.*

IT is necessary to look back for a short space on the parliament in which, for a second time, the subject of our memoir occupied the high and interesting position of Premier: first, for about a third of its six years' duration as Mr. Disraeli in the House of Commons; and during the remaining four years of its term as the Earl of Beaconsfield in the House of Lords: necessary, if only for the special purpose of discussing his conduct, and defending his object, in the support he deemed it his solemn duty to give to a measure brought forward by a private and independent member in the House of Commons—though under the sanction, or we ought rather, perhaps, to say, under the authority, and at the instance, of those without whose sanction and authority the introduction of such a measure would have been altogether indefensible, but with which it had a constitutional claim for support on her Majesty's government that it was impossible to disregard under any due sense of official obligation and responsibility. We allude to the bill which after a while became, and has continued to be, so notorious and so troublesome, under the designation of the Public Worship Regulation Act. We are by no means disposed to express an unqualified approval of that act. The enactment of some such measure, however, it could scarcely be denied, had become imperative, in the interests not merely of the Church of England, but of the Christian religion itself, in this realm of England. For there could be no church system ever beneficially maintained without a legitimate authority in its administration being duly respected and enforced—without the law of the land affecting it being obeyed and upheld; while, at the same time, its

own laws were, as occasion required, judicially interpreted by those who are constitutionally appointed by the recognised authorities of the kingdom for that express purpose, and when so interpreted required to be loyally accepted and dutifully submitted to. This is necessarily, and more especially the case as respects the Church of England, as being the Established Church of the Kingdom of England, whose constitution is a 'Constitution in Church and State.' But it is not by any means altogether confined to the Church of England. It applies more or less to every religious community in the kingdom—to every dissenting or 'non-conforming' body in the land—wherever there are just rights of private citizens to be protected and preserved, and lawful property of corporate bodies to be defended and maintained. Such judicial authorities do not gratuitously meddle with any theological questions, any distinctive doctrines, or any religious rites or ceremonies, whether of the church or of the meeting-house: disputes respecting which have, ever and anon, to be submitted to their examination and their decision. They do not presume to call in question any of these where they prescriptively and legitimately prevail, and are in just and legal accordance with the established rules and regulations of the religious communities concerned, any more than they would with those of any secular community or society. All they do is, when judicially appealed to, in cases where the interpretation of any rule, or regulation, or law is in dispute, or any infringement of such rule, law, or regulation is committed,—all, we say, they do is patiently to hear both sides, by duly constituted and learned counsel; and, bringing to bear on the solution of the question at issue that legal acumen, and that judicial experience, for the acquisition of which, and for their eminence in its practical application to legal disputes, they have been raised to the judicial bench, they, in the consideration of what is submitted to their deliberate judgment, decide the case with that fairness and impartiality which, as a rule, are the distinguishing characteristics of the administration of justice in this country, and which have made our system of judicature generally, in its everyday practice, the envy and admiration of the world.

In the Church of England, it is true, there is a legitimate and very wholesome provision against the necessity of constantly having recourse to the judicial tribunals of the realm, in the obligation that is imposed upon the clergy at their ordination,—and upon the laity also, by their religious responsibility as members of the Church, —to obey their bishop; and had this obligation, and this responsibility, invariably been dutifully regarded and submitted to, there would scarcely have been any call for a Public Worship Regulation Act. We do not mean to say that the bishops have always been precise and judicious. At times they have not been such strict observers of canonical and rubrical requirements as they might be, and certainly ought to be, in order to give that confidence to either clergy or laity to appeal to them, and to be content to abide by their decisions. We are afraid that in too many cases there have been faults on both sides. Still when the duty of submission to episcopal authority could properly be complied with—and even where it had to be done at some sacrifice of a legitimate and perhaps laudable church feeling, as well as personal church prejudice—it has been done, on the whole, with good effect, and could scarcely fail, as an example of Christian submission and subordination, to have a most beneficial influence on all around. There was a remarkable instance of this during a most unhappy troublous time in the church in certain parts of the metropolis some years ago,—at the period of those developments of the legitimate Catholic ritual, as well as doctrine and discipline, of the Church of England which, when kept within due and legal bounds, and restrained from degenerating into extravagances and eccentricities, have caused such indisputable improvements, and therefore such incalculable benefits, not only in the public worship, but in the pulpit teaching, and in the spiritual ministrations generally of the Church of England.

The case we more particularly allude to was that of St. Barnabas, Pimlico, whilst under the incumbency of Mr. Bennett, where there were for weeks, Sunday after Sunday, not only riots all around the church, but disturbances on the part of intrusive and excited mobs

within, which were not very creditable to us as a Christian people. The cause of so much uproar was simply the meritorious endeavour of one of the most earnest-minded and devoted Christian ministers in London—not to say in England at that time—to bring out devoutly, reverentially, and therefore effectually, because in their original intention and their religious reality, the ritual requirements of the divine service of the Church of England, as set down in the Book of Common Prayer. The regular congregations of the church of St. Barnabas were not only perfectly reconciled, but warmly attached to the services under the ritual and other improvements that pervaded them there,—as, indeed, were hosts of distinguished persons, peers, members of parliament, judges, barristers, and others of evident piety, culture, refinement, and intelligence, who came eagerly to witness and piously to participate in the choral public worship of the solemn sanctuary,—accompanied, too, as it was, by such earnest, eloquent, and sound evangelical preaching. And there were evidences constantly manifest of there being many of whom it might happily be said, that though 'they came to scoff, remained to pray.' But it unfortunately aroused the deadly enmity of those whose excessive and intolerant puritanical prejudices could not endure it. And on this account disturbances much to be deplored were organised and perpetrated.

Well,—in such a lamentable and painful state of things,—the Bishop of London of that day, Bishop Blomfield, thought it his duty to interpose; and although his lordship did not act with that sympathy which many of the congregation expected for what they believed to be reverential, and devout, in the services which extreme puritanism could not tolerate,—although puritanism had really no business with it whatever,—yet the faithful incumbent dutifully recognised and submitted to his bishop's authority, closed his church, and resigned his incumbency. The best concluding account we can give of it all, therefore, is that which Mr. Bennett himself has so becomingly put on record, to the following effect, in an address to his congregation, whilst referring to the time in which such troubles as we have alluded

to had to be encountered:—'Such was the year in which we were permitted, by God's providence, to be joined together to do battle against His enemies for a great principle. It is no matter that we failed in the immediate issue. That failure brings the ultimate victory. It is our victory that we failed,—failed for yielding up our cause to Him who ruleth all things: our victory was that we maintained the faith: we yielded to the arm of secular force represented by episcopal authority. *It was our duty to obey the bishop.* In obeying we conquered.'[1] Would all the so-called 'Ritualistic clergy' but act in this dutiful Christian spirit, there would seldom, if ever, be any occasion whatever for a 'Public Worship Regulation Act,'—if even any necessity, or any excuse, for the interference of parliament, or of the government, with the affairs of the church at all.

But the Act in question was virtually a measure of the church herself. It was understood to have been prepared under the supervision of the Primate, assisted by several of his grace's suffragan bishops; and to the then Recorder of London—the Right. Hon. Russell Gurney, an eminent Churchman, as well as an eminent lawyer —was committed the charge of the bill in the House of Commons. No member of the government had anything to do with it. Mr. Disraeli spoke in its support, as well as voted for it: acting, not in his official capacity, but as an independent member of parliament—for it was neither a party nor a ministerial measure; and Liberals as well as Conservatives gave it their support.

But it was a single expression, and perhaps a too hasty one, in Mr. Disraeli's speech on the second reading of the bill that gave the greatest offence to the extreme 'Ritualistic' party, and of which they made the greatest handle, in the rage and fury it excited in their ranks. The object of the measure, he said, was 'to put down Ritualism;' and he reiterated the declaration that 'Ritualism must be put down.' But none, save those with prejudiced and perverted minds, who were *not* of any legitimately 'Ritualistic,' but only of

[1] Preface to 'Last Sermons at St. Paul's, Knightsbridge, and St. Barnabas, Pimlico. By the Rev. W. J. E. Bennett, M.A., Vicar.'

an *ultra*-'Ritualistic' party, and had a party purpose to serve, could fail to see that Mr. Disraeli never meant by the phrase 'put down Ritualism' any suppression of, or any interference whatever with, the authorised ritual of the church; or of that reasonable and beneficial development of it which had resulted from the great church revival that had taken place, and which had done so much to awaken the church from the deadly sleep into which she had been allowed to fall, and infuse new life-blood into her veins: more especially in those ministrations of her sanctuaries which had almost everywhere so unhappily degenerated into the coldest, the most unedifying, and, in some instances, the profanest formalities. It was a wonderful revival of spiritual life and energy that was taking place in the Church of England; and that this should involve the giving to her ritual, as well as to everything else that had got deadened or corrupted, or neglected, in her system, or in her ministrations, that animation and that reality which belonged to them, and without which they were all but 'as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal'—surely this, we say, was not only natural, but indispensable. It was absurd, then, to pretend—as too many excitable, unreasonable, and indiscreet Churchmen did pretend—that this was what Mr. Disraeli meant must be 'put down.' No, it was only that injudicious and mischievous extravagance, and often eccentricity, of ritual which was altogether foreign to the Reformed Church of England, and out of character, in some most important respects, not only with her rubrics and her articles, but with her creeds and her prayers; and the effect of which had in many instances manifestly been most deplorably misleading and perverting.

There had been nothing in Mr. Disraeli's previous public utterances on church matters—least of all on the subject of ritual—to warrant, in the slightest degree, the suspicion even, that when he declared they must 'put down Ritualism,' he meant it for one moment to be understood that he was opposed to the recent legitimate developments of the ritual of the Church of England which had taken place, and which had contributed so much to the devotional improvement

and spiritual impressiveness of her divine service, so long as they were not of that extreme, or rather extravagant, nature which not only gave offence to sober and pious church minds, but went far beyond her prescribed limits,—and which were further objectionable, because they were neither necessary nor desirable.

It was on the occasion of Mr. Disraeli's eloquent advocacy of the church cause at the great meeting in the Sheldonian Theatre at Oxford—which we have already noticed in these pages—that he spoke so tolerantly and so approvingly of even a florid and fervent ritual, if only free from excess; and surely this ought to have shielded him from such unworthy suspicions as were sought to be attached to him by those whom he had offended by his perhaps unfortunate phrase of 'putting down Ritualism.'

In one material part of the Oxford speech we refer to, Mr. Disraeli was glancing at the unavoidable existence of parties in the church. 'I am not here to-day, my Lord Bishop,' he said, 'to regret the existence of parties in the church. Parties in the Christian church have always existed. They existed in the primitive church at Ephesus. They existed, too, always in the church at Rome. And it would be most wonderful indeed if, in a country like England, where party has always been recognised as the most efficient and satisfactory means of conducting public affairs, party should not be found in the church alone. My lord, what is party? Party is organised opinion. And so long as the nature of man is of the various and varying character which we all know it is, so long will there be various and varying modes by which it will express itself, or by which it may be counselled, on religious matters. *There are some who find solace in symbolic ceremonies, and who feel that the religious sentiment can only be adequately satisfied by ecclesiastical services in that vein.* There are others with whom the soul requires to be sustained by the ecstasy of spiritual enthusiasm. But so long as they who counsel or pursue these modes meet on the common platform of true church principles—and I hold that the acknowledgment of the church as the sacred depository of divine truth is the truest church principle—I do not

think that such courses are to be regretted, but on the whole I have no doubt both schools of religious feeling and thought have been beneficial, and equally advantageous to the country and the church. And doubtless the two great parties in the church have effected as eminent service for true religion as the two great parties in the state have achieved for public liberty and the good government of the country.'

Now surely there is no intolerance here, or any other animus, that could possibly, with any degree of justice or reason, be twisted into a suspicious indication that there existed any narrow spirit, or any desire to 'put down' a ritual in the church, the 'symbolic ceremonies,' or the 'spiritual enthusiasm' of which afforded consolation, or sustained the soul, or promoted devotion,—so long as they were had recourse to on the church's legitimate lines, and they were not at variance with her prescriptions and her principles. But many of Mr. Disraeli's objectors and opponents, it is desirable to remember, would not be content with an Act of Parliament to 'put down ritual in the church.' Nothing, there are only too many evidences to shew, would satisfy them unless it were to 'put down' the church itself as the Established Church of the kingdom.

Mr. Disraeli's definition of 'parties,' either in church or state, may be quite correct. But what a strange, what a deplorable party perversion and moral anomaly it was to find Mr. Disraeli's misapprehended phrase about 'putting down Ritualism,'—wilfully perverted, it is to be feared, in too many instances—actually driving members of a church party, lay and clerical, into the arms of a hostile faction that is seeking the overthrow of the Established Church altogether! The extreme 'Ritualistic party,' it is believed,—that church party which took offence at Mr. Disraeli for what he said and did touching those excesses and extravagances of ritual which have been provoking so much bitter animosity in the Church of England, and creating such grievous and calamitous disturbances of her peace and obstructions to her usefulness—mostly voted at the general election of 1880 with the Radical party, one of the objects of a vast proportion of

which is the degradation of the church, by the complete severance of the church from the state, and by a policy doubtless of 'disendowment,' as well as of 'disestablishment.'

Of course, as was natural enough, everything Mr. Disraeli said after this in his speech on the Public Worship Regulation Bill, was especially displeasing to the 'Ultra-Ritualistic' party, whose conduct had provoked it. Next, perhaps, to the 'putting down' phrase, there was nothing added a bitterer ingredient to their cup of wrath than the following brief, but pithy exposition of his own general meaning:—'I mean by this phrase "Ritualism,"' he said, 'the practice of a certain portion of the clergy of the Church of England of ceremonies which they themselves confess are symbolical of doctrine which they are pledged by every solemn compact which can bind men to their sovereign and their country to denounce and repudiate.' Now the question is,—and it is a most vital one in the interests of the church, and as concerns the welfare of society,—Is this grave imputation, publicly made in his place in parliament by the first minister of the crown at that time, true or untrue,—or, if you like, a plain and positive truth, or only a plausible, palpable exaggeration? We forbear from taking upon ourselves here to give an answer to the question; yet it is important that it should be answered, and until it is it will be difficult, if not impossible, with either reason or justice to deny, that in supporting, as he did on that ground, the Public Worship Regulation Bill, Mr. Disraeli was only performing what he considered to be an act of duty which it would certainly have been both undutiful and unpatriotic for one in his position to have neglected.

As such very unfair advantage has been taken of that expression in Mr. Disraeli's speech on the bill in the House of Commons, it is only doing an act of the commonest justice to his memory to endeavour to explain his conduct, and vindicate his motive. The bill, let it be clearly understood, was, if not ostensibly that of the archbishops and bishops of the Church of England, yet sanctioned and approved by them; who demanded the legislative enactment of its provisions to enable them to deal effectually with a state of things

which they were then apparently powerless to control, and which were not only disturbing the peace of the church, but becoming a scandal to it, and doing harm to religion itself. Extravagances in the ritual of the church—unauthorized alike by its rules, its rubrics, and its usages; and which had been legally adjudged so to be by one of the highest judicial tribunals of the country—were systematically persisted in, despite as well of the authority of the bishops, as the legal judgment of those tribunals; and such despite and defiance could not but have a most pernicious influence, not in the church alone, but in society at large. It was, moreover, the cause of great dissatisfaction and opposition, and in some instances of scenes of angry altercation and strife in church, and the collection of riotous mobs at the doors and even within the precincts of the holy place, frequently resulting in grievous legal litigation, and in profaning the church's sacred ordinances, and degrading her holy cause,—and all this arising out of the adoption of ritual observances which involve nothing whatever that was really *essential*, even had they otherwise been desirable, in the public worship into which they were introduced, in the sacramental offices of the church, or in anything legitimately relating thereto. When, therefore, Mr. Disraeli declared that the object was to 'put down ritualism,' it was only, we repeat, that which was doing all this mischief, and not the prescribed and authorised ritual of the church, that was to be 'put down,'—no, or any legitimate development of the ritual for the purpose of more beautifully and more devoutly solemnizing the public worship in which it was introduced, so long as it was kept within the just and lawful lines of the church's authorised ordinal. There are now many hundreds of churches throughout the kingdom in which great improvements, though they may be unavoidable innovations, have been made in the ritual of their services, but which are totally free from either congregational or popular molestation, or even murmuring, of any kind; but, on the contrary, which present most manifest advancement in reverence and devotion, in congregational participation in the services, thus performed with so much more solemnity, earnestness, and piety than used too generally to

be the case. And can it possibly be imagined that Mr. Disraeli desired to 'put down' any ritualism of this kind? The idea is as absurd as the suggestion of it was—alas! in too many instances, it is to be feared, wilfully—not only fallacious, but mischievous. In the sense which it was so unworthily sought to attach to it, neither Mr. Disraeli nor Mr. Gladstone, nor both combined, could 'put down ritualism.' Why, the very Prayer Book—which is in itself an integral and vital portion of an Act of Parliament—is, to all intents and purposes, a manual of ritual. It is full of it from beginning to end. For what, after all, is ritual—and what does the word mean in its application to the ordinances of religion? The title-page of the Prayer Book, to go no further, both explains and enjoins it, by stating that it is not only 'the Book of Common Prayer,' but also of 'the administration of the sacraments, and other rites and ceremonies of the church, according to the use of the Church of England.' Now could there possibly be 'rites and ceremonies' without 'ritual?' They constitute the very *rationale* of the word 'ritual,' which Dr. Johnson defines as 'solemnly ceremonious; done according to some religious institution.' To 'put down Ritualism,' therefore—as Mr. Disraeli's opponents, political and clerical, laboured so assiduously to have the expression misunderstood—would, we repeat, virtually have been to 'put down' nothing short of the church's 'Book of Common Prayer!' The expression was not, perhaps, a judicious one, if only because of its liability to be misrepresented. But, honestly and fairly interpreted, it could not possibly mean anything more than the much-to-be-desired suppression of an excess and extravagance of ritual, which was creating much most deplorable disturbance, and concerning which all episcopal authority was set at naught: the clergy who indulged in which having evidently assumed the altogether untenable, and certainly most undesirable position, of being 'a law unto themselves,' in utter defiance of the law which those who were 'set over them in the Lord' were to administer, and whose rule and governance in the church they were under a sacred obligation to respect and submit to.

An elucidation of this matter is thus given in one of Lord Beaconsfield's novels which it may not be out of place to quote in this connection. It is this:—

'You believe, then, in the efficacy of forms and ceremonies?'

'What you call forms and ceremonies represent the divinest instincts of our nature. Push your aversion to forms and ceremonies to a legitimate conclusion, and you would prefer kneeling in a barn rather than in a cathedral. Your tenets would strike at the root of all art which is essentially spiritual.'

'I am not speaking abstractedly,' said Egremont, 'but rather with reference to the indirect connection of these forms and ceremonies with another church. The people of this country associate them with an enthralling superstition and a foreign dominion.'

'With Rome,' said Mr. St. Lys. 'Yet such forms and ceremonies existed before Rome.'

'But practically,' said Egremont, 'has not their revival in our service at the present day a tendency to restore the Romish system in this country?'

'It is difficult to ascertain what may be the practical effect of certain circumstances among the uninformed,' etc., etc.

The discussion then branching off to an exposition as to the Church of Rome's inheriting many of her forms and ceremonies—as well as the Church of England—from the fathers of primitive times, but which Rome has perverted and corrupted.

This, however, is what we want to show from the foregoing short yet significant quotation,—that Mr. Disraeli was not only quite conversant with the subject of Ritualism, but also had his own ideas, his own apprehensions, as to the excessive and extravagant Ritualism in vogue among a certain school of the clergy—more particularly, if not almost exclusively, in the celebration of the Holy Communion—having a tendency to restore 'the Romish system in this country,' as was being so alarmingly evinced by the crowds of converts that the Church of Rome was gaining from the Church of England, consisting mainly, if not wholly, of those who had evidently become perverted by the adoption of forms and ceremonies that went beyond the authorised ritual of their own church, and which, therefore, shewed that they actually had a tendency to 'restore the Romish system in this country.' That, then, we say, was the Ritualism which Mr. Disraeli meant to 'put down,'—not that lawful ritual of the Church

of England which he had formerly approved and advocated, and his former approval and advocacy of which had been so unjustly laid hold of in order to found a false accusation of inconsistency and insincerity.

The idea, no doubt, was fully recognised that, if not 'an elaborate,' yet certainly a reverential 'ritual'—such as that of the Church of England in its reality is capable of being, and no doubt was intended to be made—was 'one of the greatest aids to devotion.' Without that, in fact, all religious ritual must be an empty and useless formality. The ritual of the church is that practical ordering and adopting, as the preface to the Book of Common Prayer somewhat quaintly informs us, of 'those ceremonies which are thought best for the setting forth of God's honour and glory, and to the reducing of the congregation to a most godly devotion, *without error or superstition.*' And it was only where it had lapsed, or appeared to have lapsed, into 'error or superstition,' by being carried to excess, or by its having had unauthorised additions made to it,—and was resulting in disturbing the peace of the church, and leading to lawlessness and contempt of authority,—that it constituted the 'Ritualism,' the bill for repressing which Mr. Disraeli felt it his duty, as the first minister of the crown, to support, seeing that the measure was brought forward at the instance of archbishops and bishops who had declared they found it absolutely necessary, to enable them to uphold their due authority in the church.

We have dwelt a little on this subject, not only in justice to Lord Beaconsfield's memory, but in vindication of the policy he so dutifully, yet in some respects, no doubt, painfully and reluctantly, felt it incumbent upon him, under all the circumstances, to support. Not that the measure in question itself was altogether unobjectionable—nor has it by any means had the effect desired. But Lord Beaconsfield was not its author; and its being substantially a church matter, he was content to leave it in the hands of the church's chief ministers, strengthened and supported, as they were, by such large majorities in both houses of parliament, and of both parties in the state.

In thus looking back on the second period of Lord Beaconsfield's Premiership, there are some other incidents brought to mind, brief passing notices of which may not be altogether uninteresting. One was his last public utterance, during that period, to his old constituency of Buckinghamshire. It was not many months before his departure. He had then ceased to be their representative in parliament for between four and five years, but had continued to live neighbourly among them, to take a warm interest in their welfare, and have frequent intercourse with them. The ties which for so many years subsisted, and ripened, and strengthened, were in no wise impaired or loosened, but had rather become still stronger and more enduring since his elevation to the peerage. The people of Buckinghamshire had learned to be justly proud of him as their representative; and this feeling could scarcely fail to be increased by the honour and dignity which his most gracious and grateful Sovereign had so fittingly conferred upon him. It was in the autumn of 1879, at the annual dinner of the Bucks. Agricultural Society, if we remember rightly, that he thus, as he had so often done before, premonished them respecting that 'democratic progress' which had continued to aim so insidiously at undermining our monarchical institutions. He was alluding to the Liberal party, which was then preparing to be absorbed, as it has since been, by that of the Radicals and Democrats, when he thus pithily pointed to what he clearly foresaw must be the result if the pernicious amalgamation was allowed to proceed unchecked towards the object in view. 'Gentlemen,' he said, 'remember they are opposed in principle to our free though aristocratic form of government. You may get rid of that form of government, gentlemen; but if you do, you will have either a despotism that ends in democracy, or a democracy that ends in despotism.' And how many indications have there not since been of the by no means either distant or dilatory approach of the realization of this prophetic premonition, with the terrible anarchy which, in all probability, will follow closely upon it! An affecting, and, as it proved, an almost farewell assurance closed Lord Beaconsfield's utterances on this final

occasion. It was in returning thanks for the toast of his health as 'Prime Minister of England,' that, in conclusion, he remarked,—'If I am Prime Minister of England, next to the favour of my Sovereign, I owe it to the county of Buckingham. But,' he rather abruptly added, 'I have already trespassed too much on your time, therefore I will merely say that I hope always to live in your affections.' Nor did he fail to do so, one may rest assured, during the brief remainder of his life.

The respect and esteem of his Sovereign, for his devotion and fidelity as her first minister, had many significant marks of kindest condescension and regard, among which one act of royal friendship, in particular, may be briefly noted, as having been most pleasing to his county friends of all classes of the community—namely, her Majesty's honouring Lord Beaconsfield with a visit at his interesting country seat of Hughenden Manor: of the classic elegance and unassuming dignity of which the Sovereign was understood to have expressed great admiration.

Another, and an entirely unpolitical though highly interesting incident, during this period of Lord Beaconsfield's career, was his presiding at a crowded meeting at Willis's Rooms to promote the erection of a public monument in the metropolis to Lord Byron, as one of the greatest English poets of modern times. It was in this character and capacity that the memory of the noble bard was to be honoured; and the occasion, therefore, attracted the attendance of a distinguished company, without any respect of party or prejudice, by whom Lord Beaconsfield, on his approach to the platform to take the chair, was received with much enthusiasm. His lordship's speech was extremely appropriate to the peculiar circumstances of such an occasion,—the object being one that had been delayed for so many years, and similar objects at the time of the noble bard's decease having unhappily, though not, perhaps, unnaturally, been resisted and frustrated. Resolutions were, on this more auspicious occasion, unanimously adopted for accomplishing the interesting purpose, and Lord Beaconsfield was appointed chairman of the executive committee.

As soon as the requisite amount of subscriptions was secured, models of a suitable monument were advertised for; and, in due time, twenty of such models were received, and were exhibited in the Albert Hall at South Kensington, one of which had been chosen for the monument to be erected; and in the selection of which Lord Beaconsfield's voice would naturally have great weight. It was in due course executed, and placed in Hyde Park, almost immediately behind Apsley House, where it is distinctly seen, both from the Park itself on one side and Park Lane on the other. The illustrious poet is represented sitting upon a rock, with his right elbow resting on a slight projection, and his right cheek on the palm of his hand, in an attitude of supposed poetic meditation and inspiration, with his favourite Newfoundland dog, 'Boatswain,' leaning against his knee, looking up wistfully, as though interested in the contemplation by which the mind of his noble master was absorbed. Its pedestal is a solid block of marble, which gives to it additional interest by its having been the gift of the Greek nation, as a token of gratitude and affection for his sympathies and his sacrifices in the great cause of Hellenic independence. Boatswain, too, imparts to it a personal interest of its own, as being the dog to which Byron was so much attached—as was Boatswain himself to Byron—and over whose grave in the park at Newstead Abbey his noble master erected a monument, bearing a characteristic inscription from his own poetic pen, the concluding lines of which thus pathetically proclaim his heartfelt regard for so faithful a canine friend:—

> 'Ye, who perchance behold this simple urn,
> Pass on—it honours none *you* wish to mourn:
> To mark a friend's remains these stones arise—
> I never knew but one—and here he lies.'

It was understood to be at Mr. Disraeli's instance, as chairman of the executive committee, that Boatswain was introduced in the monument; and the talented sculptor is said to have given a striking likeness of the dog, as well as of his noble master. No one took a deeper interest than Lord Beaconsfield in the accomplishment of

this long-desired monument to one whom, as a poet, he so warmly admired; and no one, we believe, was more highly gratified to behold it placed in so favourable a position in one of the principal and most popular parks of the metropolis.

Still another little incident deserves notice, connected with this critical period, which, as it need not occupy much space, may not unsuitably complete the present rather miscellaneous chapter.

It is an incident, however, of such mysterious ambiguity, that we must not be understood as giving it under any assurance of its accuracy. Yet it is one which, if it were really correct, would certainly reflect much credit, not on Mr. Disraeli only, but on one who was, during the whole of their public life, his bitterest and most relentless political opponent, and who in that capacity had constantly assailed him with such severe invective, that it would constitute an instance of regretful revocation, and manly magnanimity, which any statesman might be proud to see recorded to his honour. We are alluding to a witty letter that appeared in the *Standard* newspaper, and produced, for the moment, as it could not fail to do, a startling effect on the public mind,—a letter so extraordinarily apologetic, yet so uncommonly generous and so remarkably magnanimous withal, as to be received—by Mr. Disraeli's adversaries at any rate—with a very general incredulity. It bore, however, every appearance of being the genuine expression of a sincere acknowledgment—not alone of a deep remorseful feeling, but of a noble generosity, in avowing it—which the world very rarely hears of among political combatants.

The letter itself was, of course, a fiction, though it was never exposed as such, that we are aware of, by the distinguished individual whose production it pretended to be. But it was so characteristic of his magnanimously erratic mind in personal matters, and at the same time so substantially true in its general admissions, that many a one, we believe, at first sight of it, could scarcely doubt its genuineness. At the various clubs and other resorts of the Conservative party it was a common remark respecting it, 'Well, if he did not actually write the letter, he ought to have done.' On this account,

then—because of the substantial truth of what it was implicitly believed to convey, and of the appreciable generosity it so forcibly evinced,—it was difficult at first to regard it as a joke; although, strictly speaking, the epistolary form in which it was presented might apparently give it that quality. But, admitting that it was, it did no discredit to him who was the object of it. 'Jesting,' says a great moralist of a past age, 'when not used in an unfit manner, with excessive measure, at undue season, or to evil purpose, may be allowed. When jesting is so handsomely or so innocently used, as not to defile or discompose the mind of him who practices it, not to wrong or harm the object of it, not to derogate from any worthy subject of discourse, or discussion, not to infringe decency, to disturb peace, to violate any of the great duties incumbent on us (such as charity, justice, and sobriety), it cannot be altogether condemned.' The jest in question, then, did none of this evil. In substance it was a charitable, just, and sober representation of the generous mind of a political adversary, although in form fictitious and fabulous.

The amusing incident in Lord Beaconsfield's later life that it constituted arose, not only from the letter itself being in terms of the most friendly regard addressed to him—or purporting so to be—but from his being the particular object of all the generous apologies and regretful acknowledgments it so magnanimously made. And what for the moment gave an appearance of reality to the incident was an understanding in the public mind that Lord Beaconsfield himself had, in an amicable spirit, and with his usual good humour, broached such a subject in a private communication to Mr. Gladstone, to which the letter we refer to was a supposed reply. The editor of the respectable journal in which it was made public introduced it with the remark,—'We are asked to publish the following letter, which, from internal evidence, would appear to have been drafted at about the same time as the letter of apology to Count Karolyi,'—apology for having cast some extremely severe and unwarrantable reflections on the Count's imperial master, the Emperor of Austria. The letter addressed the ex-premier as 'Dear Lord Beaconsfield,'

and began by thanking him for his own letter, which, it courteously said, 'uniting frankness with kindness, rendered his task an easy one.' It then set forth the writer's view of the subject to which his attention had been called, as it would now be dealt with, in explaining and excusing, as he did, what had been his feelings in the past. It thus proceeds, — 'At the moment when I accepted from the Queen the duty of forming an administration, I forthwith resolved that I would not, as Premier, either repeat, or even defend in argument, polemical language in regard to yourself, and more than one of your colleagues, which I had used individually, when in a position of greater freedom and less responsibility. An impression prevails that I had been animated by a hostile and vindictive disposition towards your lordship. Permit me to say that I entertain no such disposition towards any man whatever, and that I at all times have particularly and heartily wished well to your lordship in the performance of your late arduous task of consolidating the empire. I feel a cordial respect for the efforts of your lordship, and I trust that, now I have myself adopted your policy, their complete success may honourably and nobly mark my tenure of power. That I did not embrace your policy earlier was due to misapprehension—misapprehension founded, it is true, on secondary evidence, but which, though the evidence of hostile witnesses, was the best at my command. Permit me at once to state that, if I had been in possession of the post I now occupy, I never would have uttered any one of the words which your lordship justly describes as of a painful and wounding character. Whether it is my misfortune or my fault that I did not obtain your place sooner, I will not now attempt to determine, but will at once express my serious concern that I should, in default of having sooner obtained it, use terms of censure concerning you which I now wholly banish from my mind. I think that the explanation I now tender should be made not less public than the numerous speeches, articles, and pamphlets which have supplied the occasion for it, and as to the form of publicity, I desire to accede to whatever may be your lordship's wish.'

There was, we repeat, no public disavowal, that we are aware of, of this remarkable attempt to represent Mr. Gladstone's sentiments towards Lord Beaconsfield, after he had succeeded in displacing him from his high official position in the state. And this may not improbably be accounted for by the fact of its being known, in so many quarters, how correctly what was attributed to him of a personal and friendly kind expressed his feelings, as those which it was strictly in accordance with his nature to entertain, towards so able and so eminent a political adversary. For, in justice to Mr. Gladstone, it cannot be denied that, party feeling aside—and there have been several occasions when he has unhesitatingly laid it aside, at least for the nonce—he can, with exemplary magnanimity, display the natural benevolence of his character in private life—a benevolence which is so admirable and conspicuous a characteristic in the midst of political contentions and party animosities.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE GLADSTONE ADMINISTRATION.

'We do fear this body hath a tail,
More perilous than the head.'—*Cymbeline.*

THE Administration which replaced Lord Beaconsfield's was one containing the most perilously Radical and notoriously democratic elements that ever, perhaps, pervaded a British ministry before. But such elements had become indispensable, owing not only to the political situation of the occasion, in a party point of view, but also to the wild outbursts of democratic policy and progress in which he who constructed the new cabinet, and was the head and chief of the Liberal government, had indulged in those Midlothian orations which had done so much in securing his overwhelming Liberal majority at the general election. He had urged the necessity of his being supported by 'an *united* Liberal party'—a party, that is, including not only Whigs and Liberals of all the diverse colours and complexions as aforetime, but also most of the phases of advanced Radicalism which might be enlisted into their ranks by such plausible promises as the Whigs knew well how to hold out. Some members of the Cabinet, therefore, had to be indubitably of this political character, as the representatives of 'masses' of the people, whose support might otherwise have been withheld, if not also their opposition excited.

No one, probably, more readily detected the nature, or sooner foresaw the danger, of such a coalition, than Lord Beaconsfield did; as no one, assuredly, could feel greater anxiety as to the issues it foreboded. He did not live, unfortunately, to exercise that check upon the policy the coalition was calculated to necessitate which it might have been in his power to do; yet enough had been made

evident, ere death deprived the country of his services, to confirm his worst apprehensions. The ministerial action in the Bradlaugh case in the House of Commons, for instance, was an early indication of mischief in one direction; and the ministerial measure for confiscating the property of the Irish landlords—under the plausible pretext of its being a 'Compensation for Disturbance Bill'—was a scarcely less alarming indication in another. The former showed that even our common Christianity might come to be disregarded in parliament to please one section of such a confederacy, while the latter became exemplified by the fear that all security of property might have to be sacrificed in order to conciliate the communistic covetings of another. And it was this latter apprehension that formed a salient point in one of the latest of his lordship's speeches in the House of Lords,—a speech of deep interest and invaluable admonition at the time, and one which, as subsequent events showed, furnished a striking proof of his political foresight and sagacity.

Already, indeed, on the subject of Ireland, had Lord Beaconsfield sounded the note of warning as to much that has since occurred in that distracted and demoralised country. Immediately preceding the general election, which resulted in removing him and his colleagues from office, he had addressed a public letter to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, the Duke of Marlborough, announcing the dissolution, of which he spoke as an event that 'would afford an opportunity to the nation to decide upon a course which would materially influence its future fortunes and shape its destiny'—slightly but significantly glancing, at the same time, at some of the reasons for such a conjecture: reasons which subsequent occurrences have remarkably verified. By the Liberals—from their Prime Minister downwards—his warnings and monitions were only ridiculed and railed at! But Lord Beaconsfield, though unhappily he did not long survive the occasion, yet did live only too clearly to see and too sadly to lament their fearful realization—some of them to the very letter.

His memorable speech in the House of Lords upon what the ministry called the 'Compensation for Disturbance (Ireland) Bill,'

which it was sought to justify by such plausible pretences, and fallacious subterfuges, was a further and still more forcible warning than before against the consequences that were ensuing, and would continue to ensue, from the perilous Irish policy that was being adopted. The ministerial bill, let it be remembered, was one not only for facilitating the tenants plundering their landlords of considerable amounts of rent, both present and future, but for preventing the landlords recovering, for some time, if ever, the vast and long-standing arrears of rent that were due to them, and for which they had waited, in some instances for years, with such exemplary patience and forbearance. Not that this was allowed to be very apparent in the face of what the bill was to enact. But such, as was clearly shown in the debate, would be among its practical effects, and on the strength of which the Lords, so justly and so courageously, took upon them to throw it out,—Liberal as well as Conservative peers voting against it.

And there could be no doubt that Lord Beaconsfield's speech powerfully strengthened the resolution of the dissentient peers, whether Conservative or Liberal, to reject the bill; while at the same time it exposed, in other respects, the mischievous nature of the ministerial policy in Ireland. 'My Lords,' the noble earl observed, 'I believe it is possible there may be disturbances in Ireland, and for this reason: because you have had proposed to you this bill, and, whether it be adopted or whether it be rejected, it is a measure calculated to excite the minds of an imaginative people; and if the distress, which I trust may be declining, proceeds in that country, I think it not impossible that, in consequence of the very measures brought forward to avoid civil conflict, you may find yourselves involved in trouble and disaster. There is one feature about the present agitation in Ireland which is most repulsive, and I think most dangerous,—an agitation conducted by men who have been taught to believe that the property of others ought to belong to them, and that, if they only exert themselves, must belong to them; an agitation conducted in such a spirit, and for such a result, is one which her Majesty's

Government will find more difficult to deal with than any of the agitations of previous years.' Now here we have some striking forecasts in opinion, and some remarkable premonitions and warnings. It has been shrewdly said, that 'he who can take advice is sometimes superior to him who can give it.' And what a superiority might not Mr. Gladstone have gained, in the estimation of us all, had he but condescended to profit by the advice that was so disinterestedly and so sagaciously suggested in these remarks of one who had, most unfortunately for both countries, been deprived of the opportunity of giving effect to them in that high official position which might have ensured them success. They were the warnings too, let it not be forgotten, of one who, as a minister of the crown, had so recently shown forth his capability of forming the practical conclusions on which they were based. In the speech of the Sovereign by which the session of parliament had been opened, Mr. Gladstone had put into the mouth of her Majesty the following words,—'I am persuaded that the loyalty and good sense of my Irish subjects will justify me in relying on the provisions of the ordinary law firmly administered for the maintenance of peace and order.' This hopeful persuasion which Mr. Gladstone had induced his Sovereign to entertain could only have been justified—if justified at all—by the comparative success that had attended Lord Beaconsfield's Irish policy, notwithstanding the difficulties he, too, had to encounter in administering the affairs of Ireland: difficulties which had been aggravated in no slight degree, as Mr. Gladstone himself must by that time have become aware, by the hostile and often factious conduct of the Liberal party. And yet such policy was soon set aside, and another and a totally adverse one unwisely and rashly substituted. And this, not from any superiority of statesmanship, but so far to accord with the democratic iples of colleagues as would reconcile them to their anomalous n, and tend to maintain the support of a 'united party,'—a se unity could only be preserved by most dangerous con-

ew of the question is still more forcibly sustained by the

following further remarks of Lord Beaconsfield on the same occasion: 'We are all,' he said, 'agreed that the condition of Ireland is, in some respects, most pitiable, and that the policy of England should be such as to alleviate the unhappy condition of the Irish people. But we believe also that for the last fifty years, with almost a continuous effort, that has, in the main, been the policy of England, pursued by both the great parties in the state. The noble duke (the Duke of Argyll) has said that there is extraordinary agricultural distress in Ireland. Well, it is possible there may be. But I cannot understand that the best way of alleviating the agricultural distress is by plundering the landlords. I know well there is a party hostile, and avowedly hostile, to that constitutional position which, in our system of government, has been accorded to the landed interest. They are men who would sooner see a government established by the application of abstract principles than resting upon the influence of tradition, and upon the strength that results from experience. I do not believe this is a numerous party, but it is an intellectual party. It is intelligent and persevering, and it is actuated by that enthusiasm which novelty inspires, and by all that energy which I believe is a characteristic of minorities.' This, then, was the party to which, although still not a 'numerous party,' there was suddenly given the strength of one that was 'numerous,' as well as 'intelligent and persevering,' by its being taken, at the instance of Mr. Gladstone, into a sort of co-partnership with the great Whig party, and every stimulus given it there,—thus leavening the whole mass of the alliance with its own dangerous principles.

But this was much more a desperate than a novel expedient—save, perhaps, in one respect only. Coalitions of that kind had not unfrequently occurred before. It was, in fact, an old Whig expedient, whenever the party found itself in critical circumstances. But never before, we believe, had the 'advanced' party been actually represented in the government,—certainly not in the cabinet. And this was forcibly pointed out, and judiciously commented upon, by Lord Beaconsfield, in a subsequent part of the speech from which we

have been quoting. 'This is the first time,' he with much seriousness observed, 'in the history of England that the leaders of this party have found a seat in the councils of the Queen. My lords, I look upon this bill as being what military men would call a reconnaissance in force to see what is the feeling of parliament, and of the people of England, upon the present tenure of land in England, and upon the constitutional position in our system of government of the landed interest. It has been a most effective reconnaissance; though I cannot say it has been a very successful one. If they wished to know of the colossal majority of 170 in the House of Commons gained at the last general election, with regard to this subject, they have learned that two-thirds of the majority on that occasion either kept away or voted against them. They have learned that the bill has been sent up to this House by a majority consisting merely of that section of the House of Commons who treat the bill itself avowedly with contempt, and who, with courageous candour, tell us they only adopt it because they consider it merely as a step to assist them in the transference of the soil from the legal possessor to the casual occupier. I know well that it is difficult to persuade some simple minds that the opinions which are now circulated with great confidence are opinions that ought to be resisted by all those who love the greatness and the glory of their country. There is at the present day too great a tendency to believe that it is impossible to resist the progress of a new idea. There is a fashionable phrase now that everything is inevitable, and that every event is the production of a commanding cause of nature which human will cannot resist. The despotism of public opinion is in everybody's mouth; but I should like to know, when we are called upon to bow to this public opinion, who will define public opinion. We who live in this busy age, and in this busy country, know very well how few there are who can obtain even the elementary knowledge necessary for the due comprehension of great political subjects, and how much fewer there are who, having obtained that elementary knowledge, can supply the thought which can mature it into opinion. No, my

lords, you are now called upon to legislate in a heedless spirit, by false representations of what is called the public mind. The bill is only the first in a series, the result of which will be to change the character of this country. The argument that you cannot stop upon this ground—urged by my noble and learned friend (Lord Cairns)—has never been answered. If you intend to stop upon it, you were not justified in making this proposition. The proposition is one I think most dangerous to the country, and I trust your lordships will this night reject it. If you do that, you will do a deed for which your country will be grateful, and of which your posterity will be proud.' And their lordships wisely and patriotically did reject it. And the country has indeed had good reason to be grateful, while posterity cannot fail to be proud of it, if only as a check to what, when once in operation 'according to law,' must undermine the very foundations of all real property—nay, vitiate the principles of all property whatever—and thereby endanger, if not destroy, in a reign of inevitable anarchy, that without which society itself must fall to pieces, all enlightened progress and social refinement be at an end, and 'chaos come again.' This may, to the superficial observer, appear an extravagant, if not an absurd idea. And yet is it substantially and logically only too true a calculation of cause and effect. 'Two principles govern the moral and intellectual world,' says a great philosopher. 'One is perpetual progress, the other the necessary limitation to that progress. If the former alone prevailed, there would be nothing steadfast and durable on earth, and the whole of our social life would be the sport of winds and waves.' It is that downward, or 'democratic progress,' as those who are its promoters so proudly call it, which is the 'perpetual progress' here spoken of—that, one of the 'necessary limitations' to which is the security of property; a security without which civilized society could never long hold together. And this security the bill which Lord Beaconsfield so successfully pointed out to the House of Lords the duty of rejecting, would at once have undermined, if not eventually have destroyed.

A landed interest is naturally an obnoxious institution in democratic estimation; and for this, among other reasons, because it invests the possessor with 'a stake in the country,' which makes it his interest not only to support the laws which give security to his property, but to uphold the system of government under which such laws have been enacted, and are enforced, and are perpetuated. Lord Beaconsfield spoke advisedly and warningly when he said how well he knew 'there was a party hostile, and avowedly hostile, to the constitutional position which, in our system of government, has been accorded to the landed interest.' The party meant, of course, is the Democratic party—the extreme Radical party—the party whose political principles are largely at variance with our system of government, as that of a constitutional monarchy. Such a party, therefore, cannot but be a dangerous one where monarchical institutions are the established institutions of a country, and those under which the country has grown great and powerful, become prosperous and wealthy, as England has done. And it certainly was not only a most objectionable anomaly, but a very regretable innovation, that any of the representatives of an extreme party in the state should have been allowed to exert a powerful influence in the ministry. Well might Lord Beaconsfield demur to this, and point to it deprecatingly, and with the voice of warning, declaring—'*This is the first time in the history of England that the leaders of this party have found a seat in the councils of the Queen.*' Let us hope it will be the last,—though one can scarcely expect it, unless that 'democratic progress' of which they boast is promptly checked and impeded by a powerful Conservative counteraction.

That property is an important element in the political system of a great country like ours had often been strongly insisted upon by Lord Beaconsfield. And how important—and how popularly so—he had shewn by one remark, among many others, when he said, in one of his great speeches at Manchester—'What is the first quality which is required in a Second Chamber? Without doubt independence. And what is the best foundation for independence? Without doubt

property.' And again, when on the same occasion he declared,—'One of the elements of territorial property is that it is representative.' It represents, among other qualifications, 'a stake in the country;' and if it did nothing more, it would qualify for the advantageous discharge of electoral as well as legislatorial duties in an eminent degree.

How mischievous, then, must that policy of any ministry be which has a tendency to impair the security, or weaken the influence, of property, and of landed property above all other possessions. And yet this was to be the effect of the ministerial measure Lord Beaconsfield so happily induced the House of Lords to reject. And that a somewhat similar measure has had the effect—and this, apparently of set purpose, by the Gladstone government, together with the agrarian policy that has otherwise been pursued—has had too terrible, too startling realizations in that ill-fated island, to leave any doubt whatever as to who was right, whether Lord Beaconsfield or Mr. Gladstone, in those antagonistic principles of rule and governance in Ireland which each of them held and applied, in dealing with its condition.

We dwell upon this important speech of Lord Beaconsfield's, so interesting as being one of the last he delivered in parliament, more particularly because it contained, concisely and in some degree incidentally, such striking indications and illustrations of a policy under the pursuance of which he left Ireland more orderly and tranquil than it had often been; and the rejection of which by his Liberal successor in office so soon reduced that country to a state of turbulence,. lawlessness, and disaffection, which in numerous instances has presented most revolting displays, not only of anarchy, but of barbarism. One prominent and peculiar feature of the mischief thus done was, we repeat, the manifest insecurity of landed property that was everywhere produced, and the evil influences of which have already been partially felt both in England and Scotland. Not but that, as we have shown, there had long been on the part of a considerable section of the advanced Liberal party a strong hostility to the landed interest of the United Kingdom generally, though more especially in Ireland.

But it was an obvious and perhaps a natural, if not in some measure an intentional consequence of that policy, aggravated by wild democratic expositions of its pretended advantages, to make the landed interest an unpopular and invidious one, which certainly in Ireland it has done with a vengeance. Nothing is easier with an expert and unscrupulous Radical demagogue than to set an ill-informed and impoverished multitude against the owners of property,—notwithstanding that the agitator may, nay must, be only too well aware how true are the conclusions which all our great political philosophers, with scarcely an exception, have drawn, after thoroughly and experimentally examining the question in all its bearings, that—as given in the expressive words of one of them—'Upon the several accounts we may venture, with a few exceptions, to pronounce, that even the poorest and the worst provided for in countries where property, and the results of property, prevail, are in a better situation, with respect to food, raiment, houses, and what are called the necessaries of life, than *any* are in places where things remain in common,'—emphatically adding—'the balance, therefore, upon the whole, must preponderate in favour of property with a manifest excess.'[1] Hence the importance which the laws of all civilised nations have invariably attached to the rights of property. And thus, as Blackstone and so many other eminent jurists do not fail to remind us, the Legislature of England has constantly promoted the just ends of civil society, the peace, security, and general welfare of individuals, by faithfully and steadily pursuing that just and wise maxim of assigning, not to landed property only, but to everything capable of being legitimately appropriated and possessed, a legal and determinate owner, and by protecting him in his ownership.

It is such considerations as these,—and they must be allowed to have pertinent and powerful influences under the circumstances that have been referred to,—which it is so desirable should not be lost sight of, when an agitation has been excited by a great political party in the kingdom, that so soon, as might have been expected, came

[1] Paley's Political Philosophy.

to be taken advantage of, and eventually to be conducted—to cite again the accurate and seasonable words of Lord Beaconsfield,—'by men who have been taught to believe that the property of others ought to belong to them, and that if only they would exert themselves, it must belong to them.' This was the prominent feature of that agitation which the 'united' Liberal party had so recklessly provoked all over the country, for the purpose of regaining office, and which Lord Beaconsfield saw such great reason to dread, and to denounce,—though it was one, as he showed, that was not altogether of a novel kind. 'It has taken,' he on the same occasion said to their lordships, 'many forms. It has been led in Ireland by men of different characters and idiosyncracies. It has taken the form of Radical, it has taken the form of Home Rule; and you may observe that all these movements had over them a varnish, no doubt a mere varnish, of what may be called generous feeling. Even a Fenian was a patriot, or thought he was. But if the present agitation is fostered in Ireland by the government, it is one which will not easily terminate, because it is an agitation addressed to the most sordid character of the Irish people.' All this, of course, must have been well known to those whose anxiety to overthrow Lord Beaconsfield made them indifferent as to the means by which such desires were to be gratified. And the subsequent dangerous and demoralised state of Ireland was part of the penalty which the country had to pay for the Liberal party's gratification.

These strictures involve patriotic principles; if only because, if patriotism be love of country, it must necessarily be patriotic to entertain and to enforce such principles; since no man in a state of civilization could well love a country that was semi-barbarous, or in anarchy, as any country must inevitably be where no such thing as a recognised right of property prevailed, but simply a strength of will and of arm, ever tyrannously and cruelly exerted by the powerful against the powerless. In 'ancient, barbarous times,' long, long ago, no doubt it was so here at home, when there was in force, not by legislation, but by outrage, what has poetically been described as,

'The good old rule, the simple plan,
That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can.'

But who that has ever enjoyed the blessings of civilised society, with all its rational liberty, and all its security of life and property, would ever wish to retrograde into such a semi-savage state of things?

And it was not only patriotic principles such as these that always actuated Lord Beaconsfield, from the very commencement of his eventful political career to its close, but also that patriotic policy he pursued, arising out of them, which invested the property in land, above everything else, not merely with a prestige, but a privilege, that always redounded to the honour of the country, and conduced to the stability of its institutions. It was comparatively early in his public life—some forty years, or thereabouts, before its close—that, in a speech in the House of Commons on the distress of the country, it is on record he emphatically declared that he would support that political system which maintained the preponderance of the landed interest; for he believed that preponderance to be essential to the welfare of the country, and he attributed to it the stability of our institutions. He upheld that preponderance, therefore, he added, not for the advantage of a class, but for the benefit of the nation. Doubtless Mr. Gladstone, in his early public life, may over and over again, and even more vehemently than Mr. Disraeli ever did, have given earnest expression to similar principles, and constant support to a similar policy,—though now he has so eagerly cast in his lot with those who have systematically eschewed such principles, and denounced such policy. But the fidelity to his principles, the constancy to his cause, and the loyalty to his party, of Lord Beaconsfield, it must be admitted, stand out in very marked and striking contrast to the political unfaithfulness, inconstancy, and variability of his great rival. And on nothing of public interest and importance, perhaps, has this been more remarkably or more notoriously the case than on the subject of Ireland; and to which, not improbably, may be attributed, as respects Mr. Gladstone, the ill success, if not the positive

failure, of most of his courageous, though unwise efforts to grapple with its ills.

The facts of Ireland's critical condition during recent times are such as speak for themselves, in connection with such a contrast as that we have been glancing at. If, for instance, it be the fact, as Mr. Gladstone himself, in March, 1880,—when Lord Beaconsfield's administration was at an end—publicly declared that, 'with regard to Ireland, there was an absence of crime and outrage, and a general feeling of comfort and satisfaction in the country'—which were Mr. Gladstone's own words, as reported at the time; and if it also be the fact that two years afterwards, during which interval Mr. Gladstone's principles and policy had been in unlimited operation there, and his own parliamentary panaceas, founded thereon, had experienced a full and fair trial,—surely it must be indisputable who had been in the right, and who in the wrong; while at the same time it is thereby proved to demonstration how unwisely, nay how madly, too many of the constituencies of the United Kingdom acted—deluded by Liberal misrepresentations, and calumnies, and sophistries—in returning to parliament a majority of those who were pledged to run counter to Lord Beaconsfield's policy, which had been so beneficial, and to support, *per fas et nefas*, that policy of Mr. Gladstone which —so far from continuing 'an absence of crime and outrage, and a general feeling of comfort and satisfaction in the country,' which he himself had described as practical results of his predecessor's—produced a state of things in Ireland that has been acknowledged all the world over as a disgrace to civilization—a state of habitual outrage, much of which was utterly revolting to humanity—a state of unparalleled distress, not among the labouring poor, so much as among those most of whom would have had plenty and to spare, but were utterly unable to avail themselves of the lawful proceeds of their property, owing to the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of enforcing their lawful demands,—and a state of defiance of all that legal and constitutional authority among a rebellious multitude which it was the great duty and obligation of an established government,

by every means in its power, to uphold and maintain; and all this with the gaols throughout the country filled with suspected but still unconvicted prisoners, and an army of some sixty thousand men, and an armed constabulary of we know not how many thousands more, on the spot, whom the ruthless mobs they had to encounter had been constantly allowed to maim, and sometimes to murder, with paving-stones and other missiles, without either soldiers or constables being permitted to fire a shot in their own defence. Had any such terrible state of things by any possibility arisen under Lord Beaconsfield's administration, what a hubbub would there not have been among the indignant Liberals of our country! But one thing would have been utterly impossible,—that of any such humble, simple Conservative pen as ours attempting to write an '*Appreciative* Life' of such a statesman!

It was a good many years before all this, and during an administration, not of an actually Liberal, but of, at least, a *quasi*-Conservative character, that Mr. Disraeli, comparatively young though he was in parliamentary life, thus addressed the House of Commons on this interminable and most intricate subject of Ireland:—'Finding, last year, that Ireland was not then a party question, being forced to give an opinion on Irish affairs, Ireland being in a state of convulsive turbulence, I feel it is my duty now to express an opinion that the government should deal with sedition,—*should, in fact, govern the country*, and that they should make up their minds to at least recognise the cause of that disturbance. It has been urged that government is watching events—that a resolution requires time. Now I should never have presumed to criticise the conduct of a government in a position of such difficulty, if they had only announced that they were merely watching events, and were prepared to take steps when they deemed that circumstances were ripe. But is that so? Is there not evidence of distracted councils? Is not one opinion given in one House of Parliament and a contrary opinion given in another?'[1] We quote this to show the striking consistency of Mr.

[1] Speech in the House of Commons, Feb. 16, 1861.

Disraeli as to his Irish policy, from the earliest period of his parliamentary career, as contrasted with the continuous tergiversation of Mr. Gladstone, as to his, when he began to abandon Conservative principles. And there was an emphasis given to Mr. Disraeli's remarks that we have quoted, when he afterwards said he felt justified in giving an opinion upon Ireland,—'an opinion,' as he earnestly expressed it, '*that the turbulence should be put down, and the causes of the turbulence removed.*'

In looking back to the successive occasions of Irish difficulty and disorder, and noting more particularly what Mr. Disraeli had to say on the subject of Ireland, and how remarkably consistent he was throughout its changing scenes of agitation and disaffection, there is one generally prevailing fact that is not only singular but startling: the fact, namely, that it was usually when the Liberals were in office that Irish grievances and Irish outcries, and Irish outrages became most troublesome, and often most terrible; and that when the Conservatives took their place,—almost as though, if not some unexpected and unseen hand had thrown oil on the troubled waters,—some unknown imperative voice had said, 'Peace, be still.' Distress and disaffection in Ireland were among the factitious reasons urged in 1846 for the repeal of the Corn Laws, soon after Lord John Russell had displaced Sir Robert Peel as Prime Minister. After Mr. Gladstone's Liberal ministry had succeeded that of Mr. Disraeli in 1868, clamour, disaffection, discomfort, and disorder in Ireland were all pressed into the Prime Minister's plausible pretences for putting down the Irish Church Establishment, and unfairly depriving it of its lawful and, by right, inalienable possessions. And on the first occasion of that unwise object being formally mooted in the House of Commons, it was thus that Mr. Disraeli exposed the hollowness of such popular pretexts:—'Taking a limited practical view of the condition of the Irish people,' he said, 'I ask, is it now worse than it has hitherto been? So far as my researches guide me, you find them in a much better position. They are in the enjoyment of social and political rights they did not formerly possess;

they are better fed, better clothed, and better paid for their labour than they used to be. This as regards the working population. Then, as respects the middle class,—they are more wealthy, and more enterprising; and the landlords, upon whom such attacks are made, have an advantage which English landlords do not always have—they get their rents pretty well paid. Is the condition of Ireland, then, worse at this moment, when we are called upon precipitately to take this serious step, than it was before the revolutionary war? Were the people then better fed and better clothed? Were their wages higher, or so high? You know they were not.'[1] Nor would they, therefore, have all at once become disaffected and ungovernable, so soon as the Liberals got into power, had they not known that such a government, owing to the incongruous and disjointed nature of its composition, was not in a position to govern them, or capable of resisting their defiance.

And as thus, over and over again, aforetime it had been, so was it now that once more Mr. Gladstone had displaced Mr. Disraeli from the premiership. Only, on the last occasion, the plundering principle of confiscation was to be applied to *corporate*, and on this occasion to *private* property. But Mr. Disraeli had confidently predicted that to this it would be sure to come in due time. The principle once adopted, he maintained, could not easily be limited to one description of property, but, should political or party expediency require it, the precedent of its adoption would come to be held as justifying its application to property of any other kind. 'See in what inscrutable mischief we may be landed,' were again Mr. Disraeli's warning words, 'if this principle is once sanctioned. It cannot,' he continued, 'be confined to corporate property, because it has no affinity to corporate property. We shall be so inured to plundering churches, that the moment a corporation is known to be in possession of a large property, an hon. or a right hon. member will give notice of his intention to bring the subject before the House. The fact is, that our eyes are shut to the enormity of the

[1] Speech in the House of Commons, March 17th, 1869.

circumstances when they are tested by objects with which we are familiar. Therefore let us try this principle, which is an open principle, and not peculiar to corporations, and apply it to private property.' And this he proceeded to do, in theory. It is scarcely necessary to do more than thus allude to it, however, since it has already come to be carried out in practice, to the most distressing impoverishment of a great many, and the utter ruin of not a few, hitherto either wealthy or well-to-do Irish families, who had done nothing whatever to deserve so grievous an infliction.

In the course of one of his speeches on the plunder of the Irish Church, Mr. Disraeli said that 'there was another reason why he was greatly opposed to the confiscation of church property, which was because he invariably observed that when such property was confiscated it was always given to the landed proprietors.' But he immediately endeavoured to set himself right with respect to that interest, by the following explanation:—'I hope, sir, that in this House I shall not be accused of being opposed to the interests of those concerned with the land of this country. I look upon the land tenure of this country as, on the whole, one of the most beneficial and most successful institutions that has been created out of the feudal system. It is a tenure that, by dispersing over the soil of this country a number of residents deeply interested in it, has secured local government, which is the best safeguard of political liberty; and, on the other hand, it is a tenure which, while it has attained for us great social and political advantages, has been consistent with making the soil of this country, on the whole, the most productive in the world;—that is to say, not only in the old world, but the new world, you cannot find a tract of land of equal size with that of the United Kingdom which is so generally and so uniformly productive. Therefore I think I am justified in saying that it is a tenure which, both in its social and political advantages, and in the most material consequences it has secured to the country, may be truly described as one of the most advantageous in the world. And I cannot have the slightest objection myself to the landed proprietors of the country

increasing their wealth, and increasing their power, so long as they do it by legitimate means—by the improvement of their estates, or in the fulfilment of those duties which the constitution of their country generously, but wisely, has assigned to them.'[1] These are sentiments which have a special and interesting application to the question of landed property, as it has since been so unscrupulously and so mischievously dealt with in Ireland by a Radical ministry, backed by a tyrant majority in the House of Commons of their own packing.

We think it has thus been shown, therefore, that not only was Lord Beaconsfield justified in saying, with respect to the confiscating policy of the measure he so powerfully contributed to throw out in the House of Lords, that it was one 'most dangerous for the country,' but that in doing so he acted consistently with his repeatedly expressed opinion during his long and eventful parliamentary career, one of the closing scenes of which was this memorable occasion of his successfully vindicating great constitutional and social principles, from the advocacy of which he had never shrunk when he thought that the interests of his country called upon him to defend them.

This of itself would be sufficient to invest such incidents as we have referred to with great interest and importance, in the life of such a statesman as Lord Beaconsfield, and in such times as those in which they occurred. But that interest and that importance became increased and heightened in an eminent degree when connected with what has since taken place in Ireland, under the same Radical ministry against whose measure of confiscation one of Lord Beaconsfield's last votes in parliament was so justly, so wisely, and so successfully recorded. He probably had little idea that it would be one of his last, at the time,—nor, indeed, had his attached friends and anxious supporters such gloomy apprehensions. Yet it was anything but an inglorious, though an unostentatious, conclusion to such a career, if only because it was a final ratification of a vitally important policy, which he had always advocated, and had neglected no opportunity of acting upon. *Finis coronat opus.* And this was an end that

[1] Speech in the House of Commons, March 18th, 1869.

certainly, whilst it crowned with glory *one* work, at least, which he had pursued steadfastly and unchangeably throughout that active and brilliant public career, gave a concluding, and, as such, a strengthening assurance of the rectitude of his principles and the soundness of his patriotism,—and one, the example of which will doubtless long continue to exert a beneficial influence on political sentiment as oft as it is remembered among

'The remnants of things that have passed away.'

It was long before the state of things had arisen which this last vote of vital moment that Lord Beaconsfield gave in parliament was meant to denounce, and to discourage, that he had foreseen and foretold it. And there is evidence of that prescience and prediction in the concluding lines of his remarkable novel of 'Sybil'—so full of politics, as it is, as well as of personations—which may fittingly conclude this particular chapter:—'Time that brings all things has brought to the mind of England some suspicion that the idols they have so long worshipped, and the oracles that have so long deluded them, are not the true ones. There is a whisper rising in this country that loyalty is not a phrase, faith not a delusion, and popular liberty something more diffusive and substantial than the profuse exercise of the sacred rights of sovereignty by political classes. That we may live to see England once more possess a free monarchy and a privileged and prosperous people is my prayer: that those great consequences can only be brought about by the energy and devotion of our youth is my persuasion. We live in an age when to be young and to be indifferent can be no longer synonymous. We must prepare for the coming hour. The claims of the future are represented by suffering millions; and the youth of a nation are the trustees of posterity.' May we not aptly and justly hold that his own youth was a forcible illustration of this sagacious sentiment—that he himself, as a youth, became a 'trustee of posterity;' exercising his trust alike wisely and well?

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE ANTI-BEACONSFIELD POLICY.

'With ruin upon ruin, rout on rout, confusion worse confounded.'—*Milton.*

THE dreadfully anarchical state into which Ireland so suddenly fell, after the replacement of Lord Beaconsfield's administration by that of Mr. Gladstone, in 1880, is a circumstance which furnishes such striking evidence of the superior policy of the Conservative Premier towards so disaffected a portion of the United Kingdom to that of his Liberal successor, as justly to demand, in such a biography as this, some *further* and special notice of its occurrence, and of its continuance, under those Liberal auspices that had so much to do in obtaining at the general election that large majority before which Lord Beaconsfield had to make a virtue of necessity by at once retreating from his high position, and giving place to his successful rival. It was not, however, a success that Mr. Gladstone achieved which did any dishonour to Lord Beaconsfield. That was evident to all impartial observers at the time; but it has been so thoroughly and so signally confirmed by subsequent events, and by those of Ireland more especially, as to have carried conviction, one may feel assured, to many an honest, though at the time hostile mind, of its entire and most emphatic truth.

It was a strange infatuation that could so easily prevail in persuading large assemblies of the people to prefer putting their trust, as respects Ireland, in one who had upon that subject, almost more than any other, so completely boxed the political compass. There has been no public man of modern times that has exhibited such variability in Irish policy as Mr. Gladstone has done. We have already had occasion to show this fact, in connection with his treatment of the Irish Church—that great 'Upas tree,' as he so plausibly

described it to be—and the despoiling and overthrowing of which was to exert so magical an influence in making Ireland at once prosperous, contented, and happy. Other, though minor, political 'Upas trees,' have since been discovered by the same great magician of political empiricism, and have been as unhesitatingly and ruthlessly torn up and cast out, and with quite as little effect for the purpose pretended; until at length a similar principle of confiscation and deprivation to that involved in preceding disruptions and demolitions had, in due course, to be applied by the same ruthless hand to the sacred rights of *private*, as well as *corporate* property.

And here let us pause for a moment to contemplate briefly, and *en passant*, the political sagacity and foresight of Lord Beaconsfield in this matter. It was in one of his memorable speeches against Mr. Gladstone's Irish Church Bill—that of March 18, 1869—that he thus described that long-established land-tenure which the Church Bill was so mischievously calculated to damage, if not eventually and in no long time to destroy:—'I think I am justified in saying that it is a tenure which, both on account of its social and political advantages and the great material consequences it has secured to the country, may be truly described as one of the most advantageous.' The plain and practical inference is, therefore, from such a passage as this alone—were there nothing else—that Lord Beaconsfield's Irish policy would never have been like that which Mr. Gladstone has so directed to the derangement and the insecurity of the land-tenure in that part of the United Kingdom, as to have produced those dreadful results of impoverishment, and ruin, and distress, on the one hand, and those savage and sanguinary outrages, on the other, which have made Ireland, during Mr. Gladstone's administration, what he himself in some sudden and uncontrollable impulse of candour could not help emphatically stigmatizing as 'a disgrace to civilization!'

It was on the same occasion as that referred to in the preceding extract from his speeches, that Mr. Disraeli (as he then was) pointed out how idle it must always be to expect any sound and therefore

beneficial policy from the Whigs, and showed how it had come to pass that the Tories were to be confidently relied upon as the real friends of Ireland and the Irish people. 'We' (the Tories), he said, amid the hearty cheers of one side of the House, and the derisive shouts of the other, '*we* are the natural allies of the Irish people. What! does the noble lord (Earl Russell) deny this? Was it—I should like to hear it from him—was it the Tory party that introduced the penal code? It was not the Tory party that made a factitious aristocracy out of the plunder of the church. The penal code was introduced, I repeat, not by the Tories, but by the Whigs; and at the same time a new spirit was introduced into what is called the *Protestant* Church of Ireland—a Puritanical spirit—and from that moment the Church of Ireland lost all its influence; and then those unfortunate circumstances which have ensued had their origin.' Well might Mr. Disraeli suggest, as he did in the same speech, a course of proceeding which, not until almost forty years afterwards, Mr. Gladstone began to hint at, as, it would seem, a *dernier ressort*, by declaring that it was not a *political* but a 'social revolution' in Ireland they had to deal with, and when he (Mr. Disraeli) proceeded to observe—'If we want permanently to settle Irish affairs, with credit to ourselves and satisfaction to the Irish people, we must reconstruct the social system of that country: and we must commence by organizing a very comprehensive and pervading executive. When we have done this, and got the administration of justice into our hands, we shall find a less necessity for legislation for Ireland than has hitherto been considered requisite.' But then at that time it was expedient for the party interests of the Liberals to have it considered a political, rather than a social affair, in order to make it an available medium for political agitation in support of the Liberal cause!

There would appear to have been at the period referred to in the speech we have been quoting (1844), some indication of Irish questions, at the instance of the Tory party, being separated from mere party considerations. Sir Robert Peel was in office as the

Tory or Conservative Premier; and no one seemed to hail the improving prospects that were in consequence presented with greater satisfaction than Mr. Disraeli, who then occupied an independent political position in the House of Commons, and in public life, and could say with impartiality, and without restraint,—'When the Irish question is again brought forward, a dissolution of all party ties on that subject must inevitably occur. Such dissolution of party ties on this question is, I say, a fact—an inevitable consequence. I need not expatiate upon it, because the right hon. baronet (Sir R. Peel) has admitted that Ireland is now no longer a party question. That is one of the greatest and most valuable admissions ever made by a minister of the crown.' It was on this occasion Mr. Disraeli declared, —'I never would have presumed to criticise the conduct of the government in a position of such difficulty, if they had announced that they were merely watching events, and were prepared to take steps when they deemed that circumstances were rife. But is that so? Is there not evidence of *distracted counsels?*' We here perceive some slight resemblance, in one respect at least, to the state of things under Mr. Gladstone's administration. For it is notorious that, all throughout, there were differences of opinion as to the question of Ireland, not only in the Liberal ranks, but in the Liberal government itself; and there was continually seen and known to be 'evidence of distracted counsels'—that there were two distinct parties, in fact, in the cabinet, and the more advanced, that is, the more meddlesome one, though the minority, was yet virtually by far the strongest; and this because it was found that unless that 'advanced' minority could be allowed to have, in a great measure, its own way, a secession in the ministerial ranks would take place, a split in the Cabinet would be produced, and any Liberal policy be no longer practicable in the government, whether as respects Ireland or any other portion of the empire. The doctrine, 'force is no remedy,' would cease to prevail. Rule and governance would begin to exist again, in its reality and integrity, and that state of disorganisation, disruption, and disorder, would soon be put an end to by a due application of the 'resources of civilization'

to which the Cabinet minority, and the House of Commons majority, were alike opposed, but a restoration of which was alone wanting to bring Ireland into a state of order, peace, and tranquillity, under the laws that were now allowed to be set at nought. The democratic section of the ministerial party were determined to carry out their demoralizing policy. It seemed necessary that, on this account, the question of Ireland, in direct opposition to Mr. Disraeli's wiser and sounder views, should be made a party question of by the Liberals, and be sustained and developed as such as vigorously as possible. But however this may be, all Mr. Gladstone's great measures for Ireland have been 'party questions.' His destruction of the Established Church in Ireland was made distinctly a party question; so was his ill-omened measure, two years afterwards, his first Irish Land Bill; so, likewise, was his still more outrageous measure of confiscation, his great Land Bill of 1881. And not one of these, or of any other of his Irish measures, has been anything but, more or less, *a failure;* and not merely a failure in itself, but a blunder, and a disaster, and an injury to the country; a *remedy* no doubt it was meant, or at any rate professed, to be, though, from its seeming, at the same time, a mere party expedient—and the expedient, too, not of a patriotic, but a destructive party—the remedy has, in every such case, proved to be 'a remedy worse than the disease.' It would have been bad enough, after all that had to be sacrificed, and after such high hopes had been raised but to be disappointed, if the complainants had merely been left murmuringly and resentingly to exclaim—

> 'O how short our interval of woe:
> Our griefs how swift, our remedies how slow!'

But it was infinitely worse than that; for not only was there an injury inflicted, but perpetuated—and one which he who did all the mischief has since proved himself utterly incompetent either to remove or to assuage.

There was little or no retaliation at any time, however, on Mr. Disraeli's part: certainly none in any degree of proportion to

LORD HAVLE [illegible]

[illegible]

the provocation he had received. It was, in fact, so generally on the *defensive* he rose in parliament to speak, that he but seldom had an opportunity, had he even felt a desire, to imitate his assailants, and declaim on the offensive. It is interesting to remember that his very first speech in parliament related to Ireland: that remarkable maiden speech which the Whigs used such unfair means to interrupt, to damage and defeat, but which even the unsympathetic *Times* newspaper, it will be recollected, felt constrained to pronounce 'an excellent speech.' It was on the Irish Election Petitions of the new House of Commons, many of the elections to which had been so corrupt, through the devices of the Radicals, as to have aroused a feeling of Conservative resentment, which had culminated in the celebrated 'Spottiswoode Subscription,' for defraying the heavy expenditure that was requisite to give due effect to those petitions. It was when our young parliamentary novitiate began to be effective in his defence of that patriotic reactionary movement, that there arose an outpouring of boisterous derision and unmerited ridicule, which he treated with singularly calm contempt. 'I do not affect to be insensible,' it may not be forgotten he quietly said, 'to the difficulty of my position, and I shall be very glad to receive indulgence even from hon. members opposite. If, however, hon. gentlemen do not wish to hear me, I will sit down without a murmur.' This dignified reproof having obtained a momentary hearing for him, he thus proceeded:—'I shall confine myself to an attempt to bring back the subject to the point which is really at issue. I cannot comprehend why a considerable body of her Majesty's subjects, respectable not only for their numbers, but for their independence, intelligence, and integrity, should be held up to scorn and odium by the hon. and learned member for Dublin (O'Connell), for the commission of an act the legality of which he did not presume to question, of the propriety of which they are as competent judges as the hon. and learned member, and of which, after what he has himself confessed, the hon. and learned member ought to be the last to question the delicacy. I have examined the list of contributors, as well as the hon.

and learned member for Dublin, and with a more than ordinary degree of interest, arising from the fact that the town which I have the honour to represent (Maidstone) has contributed a larger proportion of the fund than any other part of England.' We quote this to show that, from the very outset of his parliamentary career, Mr. Disraeli was on the side of order, and loyalty, and good citizenship in Ireland, and therefore opposed to O'Connell and his disaffected faction; and he continued to be actuated by the same feelings, and to maintain the same principles, uniformly and steadily, to the end of his eventful and distinguished career; whilst his Whig and Radical opponents were ever and anon making such unfortunate sacrifices, not only of their own professed principles, such as they were, but of the highest interests of the Irish people whom they were pretending to serve and to befriend.

Occasions did not fail to occur, when Mr. Disraeli had opportunities, not only to maintain that the Tory party were the best friends of Ireland, but to prove it. 'I had no idea,' he in one debate felt called upon to say, 'that the Tory party should always be regarded as the enemies of Ireland. I had no idea that they should be looked upon as those who had treated the Irish as serfs and slaves, and as those who were the authors of their confiscations and their penal laws. For, most assuredly, it is not really so. Let us forget—it were surely time—the two centuries of political conduct for which Toryism is not responsible. Let us recur to the benignant rule of Charles the First: then we may be able to settle Ireland with honour to ourselves, with kindness to the people, and with safety to the realm. At every period when Tory politics and Tory statesmen have succeeded in breaking through the powerful trammels of Whig policy, you will universally observe that there has been a hope for Ireland, a streak of light observable in its gloomy horizon.' These apposite allusions relate to facts of Irish history. But he might have alluded also to occasions when the Tory party, under his own leading, struggled, and not unsuccessfully, to benefit Ireland, even in spite of such trammels as he refers to. As, for instance, when in 1848, the ad-

ministration of Lord Palmerston was pressed by the not always judicious Radical economists of the day to see if they could not lessen the military 'oppressions and burthens' which the insurrectionary spirit excited by Radical agitators among the Irish populace excused, if it did not necessitate. At that critical time, let it be remembered, none were so forward as Mr. Disraeli and his parliamentary colleagues to encourage the effecting of sound economy and practicable retrenchment in the military service of that still distracted country, giving earnest assurance, as Mr. Disraeli himself did on their behalf, that 'any well-considered measures for that purpose would receive their careful consideration and hearty support.'

But it was when Mr. Disraeli and his colleagues had changed places with Earl Russell and his Liberal associates, in 1868, that he had so practically, and so painfully, to experience how little disposition there was on the Liberal side to give any similar help to him and his ministry as he had proffered to them in their time of trying necessity, with so many of their Radical partizans arrayed against them, just because they had found it indispensable, as usual when in office, to have recourse to a policy of unpopular repression, rather than one of more popular conciliation. It was at that time, during Mr. Disraeli's first premiership, that in concluding his powerful reply to Mr. Gladstone's motion for a committee of the whole House, for the purpose of passing sentence of condemnation on the Irish Church, he had thus to complain that those who had been in secret combination were now in open confederacy in their animosity to that Reformed Church, and to much that was involved therein, as well politically as ecclesiastically:—'Yes, but it is a fact. It is confessed by those who attempted to prevent this combination, to mitigate the occurrence, to avoid the conjuncture which we always felt would be most dangerous to the country. They have combined to destroy that great blessing of true and safe conciliation which both parties in the state for the last quarter of a century have professed to be labouring to effect. . . . . I believe the policy of the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Gladstone), who is their representative,

if successful, will change, and much for the worse, the character of this country. It will deprive the subjects of her Majesty of some of their most precious privileges, and it will dangerously touch even the tenure of the crown.' And has there not been—and is there not still being—only too much accomplished on the same lines of democratic and destructive change in Ireland—'progress' they plausibly and proudly call it—in furtherance of the same political and social character as Mr. Disraeli here so broadly and significantly hinted at? They who are *now*, by hundreds, imprisoned victims in the gaols of Ireland, were *then* cherished friends and trusty allies in that work of spoliation and deracination which the Liberals had so zealously and so remorselessly in hand!

Several little episodes in the speeches of Mr. Disraeli, on the Irish question that we have been quoting, have gained force in the significance of their subject from the further progress of the democratic and socialistic movement to which they relate. As, for instance, when, with slight digression, he said,—'But what I want to impress upon the House is this—that there is a new view of the case with regard to the question of property in the course adopted by the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Gladstone). The principle of property is contested in the age in which we live. And we cannot shut our eyes to what the hon. member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright) calls "the spirit of the age," and which entirely influences him in the advice he gives to the right hon. gentleman, the member for South Lancashire (Mr. Gladstone). In the present day, the principle of property, even of private property, has been contested; and Ireland, unfortunately, is not an exception to the countries in which that political dogma has been promulgated.' This was said as long as fourteen years ago. For that considerable time, advanced Radicals have been the confidential counsellors of Mr. Gladstone; and for some important portion of those years his colleagues in the cabinet. Constant and close association with such 'extreme' politicians can never be either salutary or safe, politically, for those holding more moderate views. 'If you always live with those who are lame,' an old Latin proverb

tells us, 'you will yourself learn to limp.' And, as Shakspeare's Cassius says to Brutus,—

> 'Therefore 'tis meet
> That noble minds keep ever with their likes;
> For who so firm that cannot be seduc'd?'

It was not long before Lord Beaconsfield left us—somewhere about the time, if we mistake not—when the noble earl had occasion to complain in the House of Lords that 'it was the first time in the history of England that the leaders of this (the 'advanced') party had found seats in the councils of the Queen.' It followed closely and not inopportunely, if we remember rightly, upon that novel but most reasonable complaint in the Upper House of Parliament, that an absent peer—the Earl of Carnarvon—had felt constrained to write, from a sanitary retreat whither failing health had driven him, to a cabinet minister, remonstrating with him on his having publicly indulged in some democratic utterances in the congenial region of 'Brummagem.' 'Whatever the contrast,' Lord Carnarvon did not hesitate to tell him, 'between your feelings as to the Sovereign, and your avowed preference for republican institutions, you set an evil example which goes to the very root of public sincerity and truth. I deny, therefore,' added this 'brave peer of England,'—'I deny that you have the right, so long as you occupy the position you now hold, "by favour of the Crown," to use language which may be fitting in the mouth of a republican, but is irreconcilable with the A B C of a constitutional or any other monarchy; and if indeed such are your deliberate opinions, you must forgive me for saying, that whatever may be your abilities, or your public eminence, you are in a position false to yourself as an individual, misleading to the nation, and therefore destructive to that public morality to which every statesman is bound to pay regard.'

But it has not merely been the anomaly of having 'advanced' political influences in the councils of the Queen. There has, it is well understood, been a standing and stubborn objection and obstruction, on account of it, to that vigorous and vigilant repression of the

rebellious spirit—and well-directed and forcibly sustained prevention of atrocious assassinations and other inhuman outrages in Ireland—that ought to have been adopted and pursued, and which, with fifty thousand troops at hand, could scarcely have failed to be effective, had such resolute action been vigorously taken. The principle that prevailed all along in the cabinet was evidently and sternly that of the Birmingham Caucus—*physical force is no proper remedy.* And hence the triumph in Ireland of outrage and anarchy over law and order, for the last two years, to the acknowledged 'disgrace of civilization,' and to the humiliation of the British Government in the eyes of the whole civilized world.

Lord Beaconsfield's government, soon after its accession to office, had carefully and dutifully prepared and passed through parliament an amended and improved 'Peace Preservation Act.' Mr. Gladstone's former ministry had found it impossible to govern Ireland—in spite of the several specious messages of peace they had sent to that distracted country, by the plunder of the church and the landlords—without successive Coercion Acts; and these expired in 1875, the year after Lord Beaconsfield's restoration to the premiership. His lordship proposed, therefore, in the session of 1874, to continue them in the 'Expiring Laws Continuance Bill.' But this was objected to by the Irish Home Rulers, as not affording any opportunity for fully discussing the measure; and Lord Beaconsfield, frankly recognizing the reasonableness of the objection, agreed to postpone a renewal of the expiring Acts, carefully amended, to an early period of the next session—that of 1875. A modified and improved 'Peace Preservation Act' was therefore introduced in the House of Commons on the 1st of March, in pursuance of the undertaking of the Conservative premier; though, owing considerably to several of the Liberal ex-ministers—more particularly Mr. Gladstone, Lord Hartington, and Mr. Lowe—coming to the help of the Home Rule party in their obstruction, it was some weeks before it was carried through the House. This Act expired in 1880; and notwithstanding that the accession of Mr. Gladstone's ministry had almost precipitated Ireland

again into a state of seditious disorder and sanguinary outrage, the Liberal premier refused to have it renewed. So that in process of no long time—only, in fact, until the early commencement of the ensuing session—he was under the cruel and mortifying necessity of bringing in a severer 'Coercion Bill' than ever, and one which, in the hands of so Liberal a ministry, as all the world to our shame and dishonour only too well know, has proved so miserable a failure!

Ireland, however, was beneficially legislated for under Lord Beaconsfield's auspices, apart altogether from that baneful agitation by which Mr. Gladstone had rashly and injudiciously paved the way before taking upon him once more those responsibilities of office, under which he soon found himself not only overwhelmed with new difficulties, but pained and perplexed also by his aggravation of the old ones. There were passed, for instance, by Lord Beaconsfield's administration—to say nothing of *their* wise and salutary 'Peace Preservation Act,' which his successors in office so unwisely and so unfortunately refused to renew—the Prisons Act, the benefits of which as affecting Irish prisons so many of those who are undeserving of such advantages have yet been destined to enjoy; the Intermediate Education Act, with its rich provision of collegiate exhibitions, which the humblest, with fair capacity and due diligence, may find it comparatively easy to obtain; the University Education Act, which promises to settle in a satisfactory manner, if it has not already begun to do so, a question that had puzzled Irish statesmen for years; the National School Teachers (Ireland) Act, which does justice to a most deserving class of scholastic instructors, by constituting for them a suitable pension fund;—along with some other legislative provisions of more or less importance among different bodies of the Irish people.

And now, how could we better conclude this Irish chapter than by a passing notice of Lord Beaconsfield's anxiety for such a result of the general election he had advised her Majesty to decide upon, as might secure a further development of that peaceful and prosperous policy of his government which was promising such satisfactory im-

provements in the whole condition of Ireland, and in the social and domestic circumstances of the great body of the Irish people. That natural and most dutiful solicitude for the public weal of the United Kingdom generally, but more particularly of Ireland, was thus expressed in a published despatch dated from the Conservative Premier's official residence on the 8th of March, on the eve of the elections, to his grace the Duke of Marlborough, the zealous and devoted Irish Viceroy:—'The acts of agitators,' he sagaciously told his Excellency, 'who represented that England, instead of being the generous and sympathising friend, was indifferent to the dangers and sufferings of Ireland, had been defeated by the measures, at once liberal and prudent, which parliament had, almost unanimously, sanctioned. During the six years of the present administration,' the noble earl continued, 'the improvement of Ireland, and the content of our fellow subjects in that island, have much occupied the care of the ministry; and they remember with satisfaction that in this period they solved one of the most difficult problems connected with its government and people, by establishing a system of public education open to all classes and all creeds. Nevertheless, a danger in its ultimate results scarcely less disastrous than pestilence and famine, and which now engages your Excellency's anxious attention, distracts that country. A portion of its population is attempting to sever the constitutional tie which unites it to Great Britain in that bond which has favoured the peace and prosperity of both.'

Lord Beaconsfield then proceeded to earnestly caution the Irish public against listening to the dangerous incitements, or encouraging the destructive devices, of those who were agitating for so mischievous a course, and to urge the importance of doing this in the elections that were about to take place—elections which would afford an opportunity to the nation to decide upon a course which would materially influence its future fortunes, and shape its destiny. 'It is to be hoped,' he then observed, 'that all men of light and leading will resist those destructive doctrines. The strength of this nation depends on that unity of feeling which should pervade the United

Kingdom, and its wide-spread dependencies. The first duty of an English minister should be to consolidate that co-operation which renders irresistible a community educated, as our own, in an equal love of liberty and law.' Then, alluding to the doubt that is always inseparable from a popular election like that about to take place, he concluded by saying—'Whatever its consequences may be to her Majesty's present advisers, may it return to Westminster a parliament not unworthy of the power of England, and resolved to maintain it.' Well would it have been, not for England only, but for the United Kingdom, and for the British Empire at large, had this patriotic wish been realized. There are doubtless many that must now deeply regret that they did not pay more respect to the important warning conveyed in this last official missive of Lord Beaconsfield. It was pointed by the prescience of a great statesman; and all that has been so disastrous in Ireland, and so discreditable, might, and it can scarcely now be questioned would, have been prevented, had what it counselled and what it cautioned but been more wisely regarded, and more generally responded to.

The chapter before us cannot be justly concluded without somewhat more than this passing allusion to the fearful consequences of that most unwise departure from Lord Beaconsfield's Irish policy which Mr. Gladstone hastened to set in motion. This course of political procedure, on the part of one who had done so much to gain the reputation of being a great statesman, was preceded, however, by an avowal so incongruous and so irreconcilable from the lips of the leader of a great party, and one who must already have begun to perceive the setting-in of what was so fearfully to contradict and confound him, that but for the *littera scripta manet* of it—nay, but that for its utterance having, with astonishment, been listened to by both sides of the House of Commons, at one of its fullest attendances —its credibility, under the circumstances, could scarcely be admissible. It was this:—that in his, Mr. Gladstone's, opinion, and as the opinion of one than whom, as so many of the *profanum vulgus* were only too ready to believe, no better authority could be well adduced—

that, with regard to Ireland, there was an absence of crime and outrage, and a general feeling of satisfaction and security in the country! On the surface it was in some measure seemingly right what Mr. Gladstone had so confidently stated, and had it fortunately been altogether correct, it was a source of gratification and pride. But Lord Beaconsfield's memorable letter to the Viceroy told a very different tale, and was designed to produce an effect which, notwithstanding its patriotic object, might militate seriously against Mr. Gladstone's designs at the general election that was close at hand.

All this became obvious enough as the elections proceeded; and it was soon placed beyond all doubt or equivocation by their result. Mr. Gladstone's great object, from first to last, was to defeat, to 'counteract' the work of Lord Beaconsfield. And this he had evidently long before made up his mind to do. No stone was to be left unturned. And yet his dearly-bought and hard-earned triumph over Lord Beaconsfield was gained by a comparatively small majority of the votes of the parliamentary constituencies. This has been shown, on high and indisputable authority, to be the fact,—a fact that has been elucidated by the following correct and intelligible statement:—Sixty-three seats having majorities ranging from *one* at Colchester to *a hundred and eighty-five* at Rochester, gave Mr. Gladstone a majority of 125; and they were won by an aggregate majority of 4042 votes,—the practical character of which result is thus logically explained:—'Of course the seats would have been lost to the Liberals if a majority of that majority had voted the other way; or, allowing for the casting-votes in those constituencies where the majority was an even number, the number of electors whose votes actually turned the scale in the whole elections for Great Britain, was 2064.'

But it answered the purpose quite sufficiently, of removing Lord Beaconsfield's administration, and thereby causing that reversal of its statesmanlike and patriotic policy which soon brought those fearful disasters upon the country, to which so terrible a succession of outrages, and so demoralizing a reign of anarchy, in Ireland, and so sanguinary and unsatisfactory a war in Egypt, bear unhappy and

expensive testimony. Of the war we have yet more fully to speak: at present our remarks belong exclusively to Ireland.

Occasion soon arose in the new parliament for Lord Beaconsfield to be confirmed in his worst apprehensions, as to the policy of the Gladstone administration, which had in due course displaced his own, with respect to Ireland. Its refusal to fulfil his intention of renewing the expiring Coercion Bill was of itself a determination that spoke volumes; whilst, not alone for the reputation of the cabinet, but what was of far higher moment, for the peace and prosperity of Ireland, only too soon did the effect of it begin to manifest its disastrous influences.

It was at the opening of the early session of parliament in the following year, in January, 1881, that Lord Beaconsfield, in his speech on the address, thus forcibly alluded to the state of Ireland, and the attitude of the government with respect to it:—

'As regards Ireland, in my letter to the Lord-Lieutenant—on the 8th of March, I think it was—I warned the country that if the government did not show a becoming vigilance, something would happen which would be almost as bad as famine and pestilence. Now, what was the consequence of that declaration? The present government took an early opportunity soon after I made that declaration to express a contrary opinion. They said there was in Ireland an absence of crime and outrage, with a general sense of comfort and satisfaction, such as was unknown in the previous history of the country. Now, my lords, that was the issue placed before the country to decide. I warned the constituencies that there was going on in Ireland a conspiracy which aimed at the disunion of the two countries, and probably something more. I said that if they were not careful something might happen almost as bad as pestilence or famine. The country, on the other hand, were immediately told that there was in Ireland a general sense of comfort and satisfaction unprecedented in the history of the country. Now, there was a complete issue to be decided, and the country decided that Ireland was in a state of comfort and satisfaction. My observations, of course, were treated with the ridicule which a successful election always secures. What has occurred in Ireland since then? What is the state of Ireland at this present moment? . . . . The successor to the late Chief Secretary for Ireland had the advantage of the official information upon which the late cabinet had determined to continue the Peace Preservation Act. That information consisted of confidential reports from seventy persons of the highest authority in this matter. All that he had, which alone ought to have convinced him that the time had arrived when that Act ought to be continued. However, her Majesty's government took quite a different view. They made up their minds not only to give a good shake to the Congress of

Berlin, and to do everything they could to inform every being in Central Asia, and in every other part of Asia, that they meant to cut and run from the scene of a splendid conquest, but, following the same plan of throwing a stigma on everything which their predecessors had proposed or executed, they determined that Ireland was to be considered as a country in a state of comfort and satisfaction; and they have from that moment been legislating and administering affairs for a country in a state of comfort and satisfaction.'

When Lord Beaconsfield delivered, in his place in parliament, the speech of which the foregoing lines are an extract, Mr. Gladstone had not been quite a year in office; and we thus see what an advance he was already making in his meditated departure from his more prudent and more cautious predecessor's policy. Certainly, as Lord Beaconsfield reminded their lordships, and through them the country, he, at any rate, had not failed to sound aloud the note of warning. This he had done well nigh a year before, when he had the opportunity of doing so as one having authority,—and not authority only, but as having also the sure and certain means of knowing the necessity of it. 'If the government did not show a becoming vigilance, something would happen which would be almost as bad as famine and pestilence!' And so it came to pass. For not only was there no 'becoming vigilance,' but the policy of Lord Beaconsfield—by which a proper rule and governance had been maintained in Ireland, and peace and order thereby secured—was forthwith virtually reversed. Warning of this had been given by Lord Beaconsfield before the general election. 'I warned the constituencies,' he repeated, 'that there was going on in Ireland a conspiracy which aimed at the disunion of the two countries, and probably something more.' But his warning, as all the world knew, was unheeded—nay, was actually scouted and derided by his political opponents.

> 'What! dost thou scorn me for my gentle counsel,
> And soothe the devil that I warn thee of!'

It would be wandering too far out of our province to dwell further, as one might yet so forcibly do, on the terrible and practical illustrations of the policy that was pursued on such lines as these by Mr. Gladstone's ministry in Ireland. But history must needs

relate it all; and its record will remain with, let us hope, its warning influence to the latest posterity. Such deplorable ministerial negociations as those which culminated in what will long be remembered as the 'Kilmainham Treaty,' and its compromising concomitants—a treaty with men of some of whom the Home Secretary declared they 'were steeped to the lips in treason'—the sacrifice of one of the honestest and ablest of their Irish officials,—so fearfully followed up, as it was, by the atrocious assassination in Phœnix Park, at noonday, of his immediate successor and late assistant in office, and the systematic perpetration of murders and other dreadful personal inflictions, many of them of the cruelest and most brutal character, —all this presented a picture of Ireland under a Radical *regime*, not only in striking contrast with Ireland under the influence of Lord Beaconsfield's policy, but an Ireland which, both at home and abroad, could not escape being regarded as a standing reproach to any sort of government, or to any civilized or Christian community or society whatever.

Fortunately perhaps—certainly mercifully—for Lord Beaconsfield himself, he did not survive to have his mind disturbed, and his feelings lacerated, by the horrors and heart-rendings of such a state of things. He did not live to endure the sad mortification and sorrow of knowing all the mischief and misery that so wilful and deplorable a reversal of his own beneficent and patriotic policy was bringing on the kingdom he had loved so well, and had served so faithfully.

> 'For then his worn-out spirit sought the bourne
> Where, lull'd to slumber, grief forgets to mourn!'

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE EGYPTIAN WAR: FURTHER ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE ANTI-BEACONSFIELD POLICY.

'One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
So fast they follow.'—*Shakespeare.*

THE departure from Lord Beaconsfield's patriotic policy in the case of Ireland which we have been discussing was a course of procedure much more indicative of a contrary direction, much more unqualified, and, as respects the public interests at home, therefore, much more mischievous, than that in the affair of Egypt: though, in the end, they may become equally costly, while both are more or less fraught with demoralizing, as well as expensive evils. They illustrate alike, by contrast, the soundness, along with the patriotism, of the policy which was in each case departed from, and the hollowness, together with the incongruity, of that which was so unhappily pursued. It might in some respects, indeed, be likened to the childish diversion that used to make our nurseries ring with hearty laughter,—'Here we go round by the rule of contrary,' —for *contrary* has been, as a rule, very much the centric point of it all: often very amusingly, because so ludicrously, elucidating the somewhat satirical lines of a quaint old poet,—

'Perhaps some thing, repugnant to its kind,
By strong antipathy the same may kill:
But what can be contrary to the mind,
Which holds all contraries in concord still?'

Such, we say, was very much, if not precisely, to outward appearance at least, the rule of contrary positions of Mr. Gladstone and his cabinet. They must have felt themselves continually in a sort of quandary, of more or less intensity and intricacy; laying all the blame of it, too, whenever with the slightest semblance of plausibility they could do so, upon poor Lord Beaconsfield.

They appeared all along to forget that they had created for themselves, as a ministry, a state of things entirely different from that in which constitutional cabinets usually rule and govern; and this by having brought into their counsels the principles of a democracy: a state of things, not only different as affecting their own acts and deeds, through its involving many principles that are inconsistent with the nature and the responsibilities of a monarchy, but materially different in its influence upon, and the results to be expected from it by, those who may have promoted the administrative transition. As Lord Beaconsfield once so forcibly pointed out in his place in parliament,—'If you establish a democracy, you must in due time reap the fruits of a democracy. You will, in due season, have to contend with great impatience of the public burthens, combined, in due season, with great increase of the public expenditure. You will, in due season, have wars entered into from passion, and not from reason; and you will, in due season, submit to peace, ignominiously sought and ignominiously obtained, which will diminish your authority, and perhaps endanger your independence. You will, in due time, find your property less valuable, and your freedom less complete.'[1] Now in briefly considering this political proposition—the logical soundness of which has often been verified in the history of governments—let us first call to mind the historical fact, that it was not only a democratic triumph at the general election of 1880 which carried Mr. Gladstone back to office, but that it was his own impassioned promulgation of democratic principles, and the exposition of them, in a similar strain, by other leaders of the party opposed to Lord Beaconsfield, which gained that triumph. And so sensible did Mr. Gladstone show himself of that evident truth, that he deemed it indispensable to introduce into the cabinet he had to form, as well as into offices of the ministry without seats in the cabinet, leading and influential members of the democratic party.

As Lord Beaconsfield so aptly, and so opportunely, reminded the British parliament, such a policy 'has its fruits,' and the country in

[1] Speech on the Representation of the People Bill, March 31, 1859.

which it practically predominates has, of course, to 'reap' them. One of such fruits—and a bitter one it always is—this war in Egypt will assuredly, and in no long time hence, abundantly furnish, namely,—'great impatience of the public burthens.' It is already beginning to do so; and this by reason, very much, if not altogether, of its being itself another of such fruits—one of those 'wars which are entered into from passion, and not from reason.' For one cannot but conceive, looking to the suddenness of our dreadful and destructive hostilities in Egypt, and, in so many respects, our unpreparedness for them, that there was more of passion manifested than of any sort of reason, in rashly resolving, as the cabinet of Mr. Gladstone would appear to have done, on so terrible a preliminary onslaught as that of the bombardment of Alexandria; and more especially as the British government had made no effectual provision, if any provision at all, for the protection of the lives and property of British subjects, and of other Europeans, within the walls of the city, but had left them to be the hapless victims of that inhuman foe which it had unmercifully exasperated and enraged, and whose deadliest vengeance might, as a matter of course, have been expected to be aroused.

Other bitter 'fruits of democracy' are doubtless yet to come; even such as Lord Beaconsfield has so reasonably apprehended, when he says,—'And you will in due season submit to peace, ignominiously sought and ignominiously obtained, which will diminish your authority, and perhaps endanger your independence.' We say '*reasonably* apprehended;' for it cannot surely be an unreasonable apprehension, after what Mr. Gladstone's cabinet directed, and enjoined to be done—against both colonial and imperial remonstrances—in the Transvaal, in South Africa, when a peace, bearing every appearance of being both 'ignominiously sought and ignominiously obtained,' was only too eagerly and too humiliatingly proposed and concluded with the rebellious Boers. Still another of the fruits of democracy Lord Beaconsfield has referred to,—and one which his ministry's successors in office, in their unjustifiable reversal of his better and safer policy,

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are bringing about. We refer to Ireland, where it will need no argument of *words*, but only that one of the *deeds* they have done, and caused to be done, under the plea of securing that 'peace, ignominiously sought and ignominiously obtained,' for which they have not only, in too many instances, made 'property *less* valuable,' but really, in some cases, of no value whatever, to the ruin and destitution of many a worthy Irish family, and to the inevitable demoralization of the whole Irish people.

But not only was the entering on a fearful and costly war in Egypt highly censurable as a rash and precipitate proceeding on the part of Mr. Gladstone and his cabinet, but it was flying in the face of a deliberate and emphatic series of preachings and pledges, either directly or indirectly conveyed, on many public platforms, and in the hearing of many thousands of the people, during his memorable Midlothian campaign. He on those, and indeed on several other occasions, not only denounced all 'aggressive wars,' as he called them, but took every opportunity of railing against Lord Beaconsfield and his ministry for having had recourse to them in South Africa; taking good care, however, to refrain from showing not only how unavoidable those unhappy hostilities in just defence of our colonial interests had been, but how slightly responsible, if responsible at all, was the home government for them; and how by great care and wisdom the government had avoided participating in the infinitely more serious aggressive war of Russia against Turkey, involving, too, as it did, the perplexity, and the peril, of all-important imperial interests of our country, and necessitating so many most delicate, and most critical measures of precaution and protection, the mismanagement of any one of which might have drawn us into active participation in the sanguinary conflict that was raging. Dangers of such a calamity there were, ever and anon, on every hand; and dangers, too, which Mr. Gladstone himself did much to aggravate, if not to precipitate; yet all were escaped by the wisdom and the prudence, together with the cautious tact and just forbearance, of Lord Beaconsfield and his cabinet; until at length they happily suc-

ceeded in bringing about the termination of one of the most fearfully destructive wars of recent times, and through the great congress at Berlin securing 'peace with honour.'

No; such noble achievements as those of Lord Beaconsfield must have had too strongly the flavour of 'gall and wormwood' for any friendly notice of them to proceed from Mr. Gladstone in any of the copious and miscellaneous overflowings of political volubility with which he inundated Midlothian. But they are deeds which time has in no wise dimmed, and will never, perhaps, obliterate from the grateful remembrance and hearty appreciation of a patriotic British public. They are deeds which there is not only a peculiar and an instructive interest in remembering, in connection with Mr. Gladstone's impetuous policy in Egypt, but an impartial and thoughtful comparison of them with such unfortunate impetuosity is eminently calculated to disabuse that large and popular portion of the public mind which was lamentably led astray by the extravagant and exciting sophisms with which Mr. Gladstone's interminable eloquence copiously abounded, and but for which we should have had no calamitous reversal of Lord Beaconsfield's statesmanlike and patriotic policy to bewail—no outrage, and anarchy, and robbery by Act of Parliament in Ireland —or any sanguinary and costly war in Egypt, with all its dreadful horrors *now*, and all the incalculable evils of it that are *yet to come*, and that may possibly be *perpetuated through many future generations*,—so evidently characteristic as it unhappily appears to be of what the immortal bard has expressively described as

> 'a portent
> Of broached mischief to the unborn times.'

The character of the hostilities in Egypt, for which Mr. Gladstone, from the first, undoubtedly made himself responsible, contrasts most strikingly with his own repeatedly expressed conceptions of such fearful occurrences, when his immediate predecessor in the premiership was constrained to have recourse to arms; and recourse to them under circumstances which, if not rendering it altogether unavoidable to do so, yet could only have been shunned at the risk of greater

evil. Mr. Gladstone did not scruple, it will be remembered, to stigmatize Lord Beaconsfield's ministry, mainly if not wholly because of it, 'a wicked ministry'—a ministry which had thereby committed 'atrocious crimes,' which 'delighted in war and tumult,' 'in atrocities and bloodshed,' incurring the sin of 'blood-guiltiness,' 'breaking the concert of Europe,' 'rudely and recklessly squandering the public money,' and thereby 'shamefully increasing the burthen of taxation.' And now, all this is just what the ministry of Mr. Gladstone himself has been doing. Not that it was as true of Lord Beaconsfield's ministry as Mr. Gladstone meant it to be considered that it was, or true at all, as we venture to contend, in the light in which he described, and the censorious spirit in which he implied it. Least of all could it possibly, under any circumstances, and from any point of view however extravagant and distorted, with any excuse or justification whatever, be deserving of the final and revolting condemnation and execration which Mr. Gladstone uttered on one of his Midlothian platforms, when he spoke of war as being 'waged from sheer yearning for slaughter and oppression,' and in which were 'perpetrated atrocities too numerous to mention!'

Nothing could well exceed such fearful imputations as these upon one's fellow-subjects, in any position of public life, in a civilized country,—let alone upon him who was the first minister of the crown in a Christian realm; and Mr. Gladstone was, of all our Liberal or Radical censors, whether in or out of parliament, the very last one of all that could have any excuse for indulging in them. Perhaps as severe and cutting a piece of satire as Lord Beaconsfield ever gave public utterance to, was that in his memorable speech at Manchester, as Mr. Disraeli, in April, 1872, when he said:—'Although the Prime Minister of England (Mr. Gladstone) is always writing letters and making speeches, he seems ever to send forth an uncertain sound. If a member of parliament announces himself a republican, Mr. Gladstone takes the earliest opportunity of describing him as a "fellow-worker" in public life. If an inconsiderate multitude calls for the abolition of the House of Lords, Mr. Gladstone says that

it is no easy task, and he must think once, or twice, or perhaps even thrice, before he can undertake it. If the member for Bradford, Mr. Miall, brings forward a motion in the House of Commons for the severance of church and state, Mr. Gladstone assures Mr. Miall, with the utmost courtesy, that he believes the opinion of the House of Commons is against him; but that if Mr. Miall wishes to influence the House of Commons, he must address the public out of doors.' Or, again, the following clever criticism of Mr. Gladstone's oratorical accomplishments, so keen, so excruciating, to a sensitive mind, from its amusing accuracy and piquant peculiarity, and one which tickled the ears excessively of the intelligent and popular assemblage it was addressed to, at the great Conservative banquet in the Duke of Wellington's riding-school on a genial evening in July, 1878:—'A sophistical rhetorician, inebriated by the exuberance of his own verbosity, and gifted with an egotistical imagination that can at all times command an interminable and inconsistent series of arguments to malign an opponent and to glorify himself.' All this, it cannot be denied, is terribly severe, though by no means unmerited; for it had, on each occasion, been directly and intolerably provoked. But there are no criminal imputations in it—no accusations of 'sheer yearning for slaughter and oppression,' or anything else that imputes to him the inhumanity, the pugnacity, and the wickedness which he did not scruple to cast in the teeth of Lord Beaconsfield for what he had been reluctantly made responsible for, as a minister of the crown, by those unavoidable hostilities in Afghanistan and in South Africa, in defence and protection of great interests of the British Empire, which it would indeed have been criminal, not to say 'wicked,' to have neglected.

It would be an easy task, and not an ungrateful one, to prove in indisputable detail those characteristics of the two separate instances of hostilities that we have referred to—the hostilities in Afghanistan and South Africa—which Mr. Gladstone made the foundation of such strong imputations of political wickedness and folly against Lord Beaconsfield and his ministry. But it would too far exceed

our present purpose, as well as be wandering too inconveniently out of our legitimate province, to go into such a digression. Nor is it now necessary to do so, for any such object as that of defending and exonerating Lord Beaconsfield and his colleagues. The events in question are already part and parcel of our imperial history; and in this review, and their recital in our national annals, justice could not well fail, as it has not failed, to be done to them, because it is but simple truth, fairly and fully set forth, that is requisite for their justification,—truth, of which it has been so truly and so happily said, that 'it will be uppermost one time or other, like cork, though it may for a while be kept down in the water.'

Let it suffice, then, in this place, simply to say in vindication of these colonial wars, that, as respects the hostilities in Afghanistan, they could only have been avoided by incurring the imminent risk of losing our valuable and beneficial position in the East; while, with regard to those in South Africa, they actually and solely occurred through the precautions it was indispensable to take for the safety of our rising colonies at the Cape, and, more immediately, in the alarming crisis that had arisen for the protection of both life and property in one of the most defenceless of those colonies—that of Natal. As was justly remarked by an able public writer at the time, that, but for our resistance, in the case of Afghanistan, 'The Queen of England might still call herself Empress of India, but the real Emperor would soon have been the Czar of Russia,'—'that the Afghan war had been a great success, since it had maintained our influence in Europe, exalted it in Asia, and shown to the nations who surround our Indian Empire that we are not afraid to strike, even though the great colossus of the north stands behind our foe;' while, as to South Africa, it was the Colonial Governor, Sir Bartle Frere, who was driven to take up arms on his official responsibility, it being, in his own and his council's judgment, a matter of absolute necessity if our authority there was to be maintained, and life and property to be preserved, that a resort should be had to active warfare. And it has since been declared on no questionable authority

that such resort has been of the greatest service to the whole of our South African colonies, and consequently to the mother country; that 'the danger, the extent of which can hardly be over-estimated, has been dispelled, and at a cost far less than would have been required if the struggle had been put off; while the power of England has been exhibited in the most remarkable manner.'[1] Both these brief but telling testimonies were written during the period of Lord Beaconsfield's administration. What has been the result of the departure that has taken place from his wise and beneficent policy is quite another affair, and one the end of which is yet to come.

But it was not merely on their pretended inexpediency, or their alleged injustice, or their impolicy in any wise, that those resorts to war during Lord Beaconsfield's administration were so violently declaimed against and denounced by Mr. Gladstone. War altogether was what he railed against. The impression was created that he was opposed to *all war*, and that only restore him to high office again, as Prime Minister, in Lord Beaconsfield's place, and we should hear no more of wars, or rumours of wars, either in our Indian Empire, our colonies, or in Egypt, or anywhere else under the British flag.

And it was this idea, we are persuaded, that had more than anything else to do in causing that rebellion against English influence and eventual intrusion in Egypt, which has required the ministry of Mr. Gladstone to scatter to the winds all their professions of peace, and repudiations of wars. The rebel lion, Arabi of Egypt, had been taught by their conduct to believe that they were not to be expected, under any circumstances, to go to war; or that, should they, as they did at Dulcigno, make a warlike 'demonstration,' it would only be to try and frighten him; or, even if they did get involved in any actual hostilities, it would only be necessary to offer them a formidable resistance to bring them down as suppliants on their knees, as in the Transvaal; if not for 'peace at *any* price,' yet certainly for a price, if insisted upon, that would be degrading to

[1] 'Six Years of Conservative Government.'

the British army, and dishonourable to the British government, as well as most disastrous to extremely important, if not most vital colonial interests.

In the endeavours that Mr. Gladstone made, when preparing for the general election, not only to decry but to defeat, if possible, that policy of Lord Beaconsfield which there was, after all, only too much reason to believe he must, at heart, have envied and been jealous of, there was one auxiliary he had that we cannot but remember. Russia had throughout displayed a bitter animosity against England in general, and against Lord Beaconsfield in particular, and Mr. Gladstone not only appeared to sympathise warmly with Russia, but intimated that she was discharging a high and holy mission by a war which, though directed against Turkey, equally endangered English interests, in so far as concerned the welfare and prosperity of the British Empire. In proof of this, and as showing, at the same time, the peaceful proclivities which throughout animated Lord Beaconsfield's ministry, we would here adduce the testimony of a political writer of considerable ability, whose public utterances created, there is reason to believe, a strong impression at the time. 'The policy of Lord Beaconsfield's government,' it was justly observed, 'had been throughout consistent. It had warned the Porte so far back as May, 1876, before the fleet was sent to Besica Bay, that it could not protect it against its own misconduct. It made it quite clear that England would never fight for Turkey, even if the maintenance of English and European interests made it necessary for her to act in opposition to Russia. The warning was often repeated by Lord Derby (at that time Foreign Secretary), and when the Conference of Constantinople met, the Sultan and his ministers were given, not more clearly, but more directly, to understand, that England would regard with the greatest dissatisfaction the refusal of the reforms proposed, and must leave them to meet any attack which that refusal might precipitate. The Porte, however, refused to accept the scheme of the Conference, which it must be allowed was hardly put in the form calculated to make its acceptance probable, whilst it determined

to adopt certain reforms which would undoubtedly have vastly improved the condition of the people, whether Mahommedan or Christian. The English government would have left the Porte to carry out these schemes; but that did not suit the purpose of the Russian government, which, secure of the neutrality of Germany, was resolved upon war. General Ignatieff made a round of the capitals of Europe to propose the adoption of a protocol which, professedly intended to "terminate the incident" of the Conference, was to take note of the Turkish promises of reform, and leave it to the Powers to watch events, and reserve their action in the matter. The English government had no objection to sign such a protocol, if Russia would formally engage to disarm; but this Russia would not do, and finally a protocol was signed at London, on the 31st of March, 1877, in the main corresponding to the Russian draft, but accompanied by a declaration on the part of Count Schouvaloff (the Russian minister), which amounted simply to this,—that the Sultan might send an ambassador to St. Petersburgh to treat of a mutual disarmament. As the French ambassador pointed out, this declaration was not calculated to spare the susceptibilities of the Porte, which would not accept the protocol, and the Russian government had its pretence for the declaration of war, which soon followed. The English government severely condemned the conduct of the Russian government, which Lord Derby showed had no warrant for the allegation it put forward in defence of its conduct, and had committed a gross breach of its treaty obligations. Lord Derby and his colleagues, however, determined to remain neutral so long as certain special English interests, set out in a despatch dated the 6th May, were not affected.'[1] This, though it may seem, superficially regarded, but an isolated episode, yet involved a proceeding on the part of Lord Beaconsfield's ministry—though not supported by Mr. Gladstone—manifesting a policy that was strikingly characterised by a desire for peace; and it was a desire that was further very remarkably

[1] 'Six Years of Conservative Government.'—A very able and careful work worthy of the thoughtful perusal of all politicians.

evidenced, even though at the very verge of a participation in the threatening hostilities that fiercely prevailed, in that which so critically ensued in the Russian invasion of Turkey. It is thus related in the same historical details from which we have been quoting:—'Meantime the opposition—or, to speak more correctly, Mr. Gladstone and his immediate friends—had been doing their utmost to help the designs of Russia: in the first instance to justify her declaration of war, and, in the second place, to drag England behind what it was assumed would be the Czar's triumphal chariot. The war went on, with the result that every day the English people, at first disposed to look indifferently upon the contest and take no part in it, recognized more and more the injustice of the Russian pretensions, and the danger threatening English interests, in the triumph of the Russian armies, until at last the Turks were defeated everywhere, the Russians advanced within sight of Constantinople, and the Sultan sued for peace. The imminence of this catastrophe, the necessity of preparing to protect English interests, which, from the complete overthrow of the Turks, were likely to be gravely imperilled, induced Lord Beaconsfield's government to summon parliament for an earlier date than usual,'[1] The object of this was, of course, to obtain from parliament a constitutional concurrence in those measures which Lord Beaconsfield's ministry resolved to pursue, in order to arrest the audacious and perilous career of so hostile a despotic power as Russia, and thereby, while protecting national interests, restoring peace to Europe. Such concurrence, along with the means that would be requisite to carry their politic and peace-preserving measures into full effect, the government had no difficulty in obtaining from parliament. Nor did those measures fail in anywise of their hoped-for effect; though Lord Beaconsfield and his ministers, as at once the authors and the directors of them, had neither sympathy nor support from Mr. Gladstone and his party. But the intended happy result of them, nevertheless, was fully attained. The Berlin Congress, at which Lord Beaconsfield and his noble colleague, the Marquis of Salisbury, so

[1] 'Six Years of Conservative Government.' 1874-79.

conspicuously and so felicitously exerted their diplomatic abilities, and displayed their statesmanlike accomplishments, perfected and settled all the complex and difficult arrangements that had to be made, and enabled those two eminent British plenipotentiaries to return home as the bearers of a 'peace with honour,' which, while covering them with glory as having achieved it, gave the highest satisfaction to their country.

The calamitous disturbance of that peace which has since taken place in Egypt would never, one may be well assured, have come to pass, had Lord Beaconsfield's Eastern policy not been thwarted, and eventually frustrated, by those who all along opposed it when in opposition, and immediately began to reverse it when again they found themselves in office. Lord Beaconsfield never failed in remembering that it was neither morally nor politically right either to pursue national honour at the expense of national interest, or to pursue national interest at the expense of national honour; and, acting upon that principle, he overcame all his difficulties with Russia without firing a single shot, or without, in fact, purposely committing any act of practical hostility whatever.

It is true that Lord Beaconsfield had not, like Mr. Gladstone, many foreign foes to contend with,—none, perhaps, but remorseless Russia herself. He, though far from altogether approving of the Turkish cause, had given Turkey no occasion, real or imaginary, to seek retaliation against him. *He* had not menaced the Turks with being driven, 'bag and baggage,' out of Europe. Neither had he, as Mr. Gladstone had done, affronted Turkey's amicable neighbour, Austria, to such a degree that soon after his having become Prime Minister, he was under the necessity of humbly apologizing, through her Majesty's ambassador at Vienna, for the unjustifiable affront he had offered to the Emperor of Austria, in one of his democratic harangues in Midlothian. In the letter of apology to the Austrian government, addressed to Count Karolyi, the Austrian ambassador at the Court of St. James's, Mr. Gladstone said,—'At the moment when I accepted from the Queen the duty of forming an administration,

I forthwith resolved that I would not, as a minister, either repeat, or even defend, in argument, polemical language in regard to more than one foreign power which I had used individually when in a position of greater freedom and less responsibility.' This was as apologetic as it was equivocal. It was meant to imply, one must suppose, that he would offend no more. But then it could scarcely be necessary. He had gained his point. His 'greater freedom and less responsibility' could be no longer needful.

There was but little cause to wonder, then, at Mr. Gladstone finding among the governments of Europe so little sympathy with him in his Egyptian imbroglio—so manifest a reluctance, everywhere, to be identified with him at all in the hostilities in which he had got involved. Lord Beaconsfield could generally find the Powers sympathising—Russia, perhaps, alone excepted. As a rule, they were his friendly and considerate allies,—those with whom he laboured at the Congress at Berlin, in bringing about that 'peace with honour' which Mr. Gladstone had done so much to disturb, if not to destroy. But the Radical ministry was obviously distrusted. And this mischief arose, not so much, probably, by Mr. Gladstone pursuing a crooked policy of his own, but by finding it necessary to accommodate himself to the devices and desires of those who seemed to care little or nothing about foreign questions, provided they could further and expedite their progress at home towards that democracy *pûr et simple* for which so many of them yearned.

In nothing, probably, was there a greater contrast in policy and conduct between these two eminent rivals, as statesmen and as ministers of the crown, than in that which distinguished them respectively as political partisans, and in their official associations and alliances. Lord Beaconsfield's constant and steady course was, in all such matters, to act with firmness and with integrity; whilst Mr. Gladstone, on the other hand, had of necessity to form political and party, and even official ties and alliances that were often most incongruous. The principle of such alliances and such ties was demoralizing; while their object was not only a derogatory but a

dangerous one. Lord Beaconsfield's political proceedings, as these pages contain so much to certify, partook not, under any circumstances, of such characteristics as those which made his great rival and systematic opponent at once so unstable and so unsafe, whether as the leader of a popular party, or as a minister of state; and the contrast we have here so incidentally and so briefly instituted will be sufficient, perhaps, to show which of the two had the truest and the highest claims, as a 'pillar of the state,' to the confidence of the people.

We are alluding now to the public policies of the two great statesmen, and to the *results* of those policies as they affect the best interests of the nation; and, to make our contrast more complete, we cannot do better than give our readers an extract from a speech delivered by the subject of our memoir at the Mansion House, in 1868, when the country had been for some time under the thoughtful and skilful direction of a Conservative Cabinet. We will content ourselves with giving the extract, our readers may institute the comparison for themselves. After speaking of the state of trade in the country at the time, he proceeded as follows:—'Our foreign relations offer no cause for anxiety. Indeed there is little to be said on the subject; and the external relations of England are never in a more secure and more salutary state than when there is very little to be said upon them. At the present moment we have *no controversy* of any kind with any European power; and with regard to those subjects of misunderstanding, which have been so much exaggerated, with our Transatlantic brethren, every week, I may say every day, brings us to a better understanding upon them, and I believe that their solution is near at hand. The state of Ireland ought to be the cause of the utmost congratulation. *It is now in complete tranquillity*, and no inconsiderable period has elapsed since the Government felt any necessity for availing themselves of the provisions of the Act suspending the Habeas Corpus Act, to which, in a moment of extreme difficulty, ourselves and our predecessors were obliged to trust. That proves that the state of the country is one which,

instead of being a cause of disquietude, is a cause for congratulation. I think, therefore, looking to our domestic position and foreign policy, the condition of Ireland, the prospects of a prolific harvest, and to the wealth, not only of England but of the world generally, which will give a stimulus to our commerce and our industry, that the position of this country is one which ought not to occasion disquietude and discontent. It is the custom to remark at the close of a session that it has been wasted, and that nothing has been done. I believe that opinion is somewhat precipitately formed from opinions somewhat hazardously expressed in the overheated atmosphere of our senate; but we must remember that the differences of parties in parliament are very much like the traditional misunderstandings between man and wife. They treat each other with a freedom of recrimination which probably has no great foundation; and, however liberal may be their epithets towards each other, both parties very much question the right of anybody interfering between them and adopting their opinions. On the part of parliament, both as respects the session which is about to close and as respects even a more considerable portion of its existence, I entirely deny that it has been barren, or that when we appear before our constituents we shall have to confess that nothing has been done.' After enumerating the various measures which had been passed during the session, Mr. Disraeli concluded as follows:—'I think, therefore, there is nothing in the present state of affairs to cause any apprehension; and, for my part, I trust with confidence the English constitution to the English people.'

Would that it were now in the power of Mr. Gladstone, or of any other statesman, to give so happy a description of the state of our country at home and abroad.

CHAPTER XXXV.

WORK IN RETIREMENT.

'Absence of occupation is not *rest:*
A mind quite vacant is a mind distressed.'—*Cowper.*

THE dismissal of Lord Beaconsfield from the exalted position of First Minister of the Crown was no doubt a severe, as it was a sudden blow,—the more so that it was, to all appearance, so unexpected. We say this on the authority of those who were in the secrets of the ministerial party, and many of whom afterwards made it their strange excuse for not being better prepared to fight successfully the great battle of the general election: a conflict for which it was notorious extravagant utterances had been employed by various demagogues of the day to arouse the political passions of the multitude. The sentiment of Shakespeare's *Hotspur* may be generally true,—'The arms are fair, when the intent of bearing them is just.' But in this instance neither the one nor the other was the case. For 'the arms' were the unfair ones of misrepresentation and defamation, and the 'intent,' of course, by such means could never be 'just.' Such, however, was the actual situation of some of the combatant Liberals who had eagerly buckled on their armour for a desperate conflict. The defeat which they unfairly accomplished was all the more mortifying—and by none, probably, more keenly felt to be than by Lord Beaconsfield himself—when it came to be seen, as when it was too late it certainly did, that in too many instances no sufficient efforts had been made in time to do battle against the enemy. There was too generally an utter deficiency of that effective organization throughout the country which was essential to the due enforcement of Conservative principles, and the correction of that gross abuse of the public mind respecting them which Liberals and Radicals, from Mr. Gladstone downwards, had

laboured so audaciously and so successfully to produce. The Conservative press, generally speaking, was not employed with that skill and that vigour which it might have been, and which such an emergency required. All this, we say, was discovered when the mischief of it had been done; and the reflections that could not but arise from the thought of it necessarily aggravated the mortification that was inflicted. It was disheartening, too, as well as mortifying; and no one had a greater right to feel it, and to complain of it, than Lord Beaconsfield, on whom it fell most heavily, and most unexpectedly. It was one of those disappointments which are calculated to 'sink the heart of man;' and this, on the instant at least, without any of that 'renewal of hope which bringeth consolation.'

Yet no one, after all, appeared to be less cast down by it than Lord Beaconsfield, though he had greater right than almost any one else to feel affected by and to lament it. One who had an intimate personal knowledge of his movements at that time has told us, that 'Not long after the dissolution of 1880, and his consequent removal from his official residence in Downing Street, Lord and Lady Salisbury, who were abroad, begged him to spend some time at Hatfield, while his arrangements were being made. There is a satisfaction in recollecting,' the account continues, 'that his serenity was apparently undisturbed by the frequent arrival of tidings that must have been unwelcome. Cheered by the society of one or two members of the family, and of some of the children, who were his great allies, he was able to enjoy wandering in the glades of the beautiful park; and one cannot help thinking that when in his rambles he passed Queen Elizabeth's oak, visions of her undaunted mien must have crossed his mind.'[1]

Though, for some time after this, Lord Beaconsfield—turned out of his official home by the successful assaults of his remorseless rival—had no London residence of his own, he was never at a loss for a hospitable domicile. Rather, indeed, his difficulty was in choosing which of the several pressing offers of hospitality that poured in

[1] Lady John Manners's 'Personal Recollections of Lord Beaconsfield.'

upon him he would accept. One whom he honoured by being his guest for awhile was his old friend Mr. Alfred de Rothschild; another was his noble and always fast friend, of almost older standing, Earl Beauchamp, in whose elegant and hospitable mansion in Belgrave Square he found, as he had done at Hatfield House, an interesting group of children, both his 'great allies' and his charming comrades. For he delighted in carefully cultured children, and could, in their enlivening prattle, be as playful as themselves,—evidently concurring in the genial German sentiment of Ochlenschäger, that 'the plays of lively children are the infancy of art; they live in the world of imagination and feeling; they invest the most insignificant object they please with interest, and see in it whatever they wish to see.' What could be more delightfully entertaining and cheering at such a time to one capable of enjoying it, as he evidently was! And there was more than this,—there was that which had often called forth from both his lips and his pen such exclamations as these—'Youth! glittering youth! I remember when the prospect of losing my youth frightened me out of my wits![1] Or, again, with still greater ecstacy,—'O, what is wisdom, and what is virtue, without youth! Talk not to me of knowledge of mankind! Give me, oh! give me back the sunshine of the breast which they overclouded! Talk not to me of a proud morality! Oh! give me back my innocence!'[2] And here he had it all around him, at a stated recreative period of every day,—along, too, with that inseparable ingenuousness in which resides the supremest charm of childhood, and of youthfulness, in either sex; and enshrined, besides, in personal loveliness, making it all the more delightful. Lord Beaconsfield was keenly susceptible of such juvenile influences; and they who yielded them, it was evident, heartily reciprocated his enjoyment of their diversion, and his own playfulness in return for it.

But as the season drew to its close, and neither parliamentary nor any other duties required his presence in town, he no longer deferred his return to the peaceful rural retirement of Hughenden

[1] 'Venetia.' [2] 'The Young Duke.'

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Manor. It had many pleasing attractions for him; and it shed innumerable salutary influences upon him, both mental and material. 'Much as he appreciated the society of his friends,' she who has already been quoted, as one who writes from an intimate personal knowledge of his character and his habits, says, 'sometimes he told them he must retire for a while into solitude.' 'One of his favourite sayings,' she continues, 'was, when sympathy was expressed in his loneliness, "I find the greatest repose in solitude." But it was a solitude, so to speak, peopled by recollections. The letters he wrote from his seclusion might briefly allude to his having seen no one for some time, but they were always full of interest. In a note to the writer he says, "I have not spoken to a human being for a fortnight"—yet the tone is cheerful. Often he took pleasure in pointing out the peculiarly English charms of the scenery,—the beech woods, and the pleasant farmhouses, and the little trout-stream, where, he used to say with pride, "the best water-cresses in the country grow."'[1] Such were the rural charms he delighted in at Hughenden. But the mansion, too, though in itself, in many respects, modest and unpretending, he had yet made to abound in various tasteful adornments, and elegant appurtenances. 'In his own favourite apartments,' we learn, 'he was surrounded, *inter alia*, by the portraits given to him at different times by his old friends and ex-colleagues. Many of these portraits—for instance, those of Lady Blessington, of his early friend George Smythe, of Lord Stanhope, or of Lord Derby—called forth some interesting reminiscences when he showed them to his visitors.'[2] Both the Queen and the Prince of Wales are said to have been much struck with the artistic elegance of the interior of the mansion, as well as with the beautiful scenery surrounding it. For it deserves to be remembered that Lord Beaconsfield was honoured by more than one royal visit at Hughenden during his premiership,—incidents in his official career quite sufficient to prove what erroneous statements they must have been which were at one time industriously circulated by his lordship's detractors, to the

[1] Lady John Manners's 'Personal Recollections.' [2] *Ibid.*

effect that her Majesty had a personal aversion to him as Premier. Everything that is known on the subject shows that the very contrary was the case; that he was always welcomed as a faithful friend and confidential counsellor, enjoying her Majesty's entire confidence and warm regard,—was, in short, *one* of the most highly-favoured and esteemed of all the successive Prime Ministers that there have been during her Majesty's long and most auspicious reign.

But, reverting to Hughenden, where we left Lord Beaconsfield, it is time we stated what was now his main purpose and pursuit in the retirement of that fine old manorial mansion. The same authority we have been quoting as to his presence there observes,—'Lord Beaconsfield spent much of his time when at Hughenden in writing.' And that, on this occasion especially, he did so, all the world had soon undoubted reason to conclude, from his prompt publication of another charming novel. The Liberals strove hard to convey the idea to the public mind that, overwhelmed with sullen grief, and writhing under bitter mortification, at his inglorious dismissal from high office as first minister of the crown, he had retreated thither to 'hide his diminished head,'—his heart sunk by the dismal defeat he had sustained, and his hopes blasted by the gloomy official prospect before him. As the poet tells us,—

> 'Dreadful is their doom whom doubt has driven
> To censure fate and pious hope forego.'

And such was the dreadful doom, the Liberals would fain have had the world believe, that had now come to Lord Beaconsfield, and that he had gone to Hughenden to submit despondingly to the ruthless decree. But, as another poet assures us, ''Tis late before the brave despair.' And that Lord Beaconsfield was brave, he had often shown.

Nor had the world long to wait. It soon became known he had gone to 'spend much of his time, at Hughenden, in writing.' And so far from what he was writing being tinged with melancholy, or breathing anything that was gloomy, there in due time appeared another of his sparkling novels, the very announcement of which

had, all throughout the reading circles of society, caused a thrill of exciting interest that in no long time made impatience exhibit symptoms of becoming intolerable. This was in the early winter of the year of his much regretted removal from Downing Street; and before that year came to a close the novel anxiously and impatiently longed for was out, and had become the much enjoyed Christmas reading of millions in the educated world,—not only in that wide-spread British Empire 'on which the sun never sets,' but in the great Republic of America, so rapidly becoming great intellectually and refinedly, as well as politically and commercially; and in most of the great countries of Europe, into whose several languages it had come to be translated.

We all know the importance which Englishmen attach to a happy retirement into the enjoyment of the evening of life, whether from private or public pursuits in which success may have been more or less achieved; more particularly where there can be realised that proud ideal of 'honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,' as that which we are so temptingly told 'should accompany old age.' It had long since come to be proverbially, and somewhat significantly, called the *otium cum dignitate:* which, being interpreted, means literally, as we are all aware, *ease with dignity.* Well, assuredly Lord Beaconsfield could enjoy this; and more effectually, too, because with better reason, than most men. But it was not in his noble nature to be content with that 'inglorious ease' which all the dignity in the world seldom atones for; since there is another item of proverbial philosophy which warns us against what is so apt to become of it—another *otium* which may prove a bane, rather than an antidote, to the *ennui* of a quiet life. *Otium omnia vitia parit* is a not unimportant idiom, and one quite as ancient, and quite as wise, as the former. In every age, among every people, has it been seen, that *idleness is the mother of all evil;* while its indulgence, so far from being agreeable, any more than profitable, too often gives its unhappy victim constant reason to exclaim, 'How heavily we drag the load of life!' Besides, as respects the very object of

retirement, how it fails, how it misleads, and how it aggravates. For most true is the well-known warning line of the poet, 'Absence of occupation is not rest.' One may be pretty sure that the *otium* Lord Beaconsfield would seek at Hughenden, whilst no doubt it would be an *otium cum dignitate*, would not fail at the same time to be an *otium cum utilitate*. And the writing of such a novel as he then and there accomplished was, to all intents and purposes, an act of utility. To say nothing of its having earned the large amount of remuneration that it did from his enterprising and discriminating publishers, it has furnished a source, not of delightful and elegant entertainment only to its millions of readers all over the world, but of instruction and enlightenment; for it abounded with useful and popular intelligence, and imparted to the reflective mind many a valuable moral in social life, along with an interesting insight into the political and diplomatic stratagems and subtleties which were once but too common in the higher grades of official life. Nothing, one would think, could carry conviction to the mind more directly, or more strongly, of the popularity of Lord Beaconsfield's public character, or the influence of his great name, as a man of letters, not less than as a statesman, than this circumstance of a new novel from his facile and prolific pen being eagerly purchased by one of the most eminent publishing firms in the metropolis for a sum which, to the average novelist of this or any former age, would be estimated as a modest, yet a comfortable fortune. It used to be said—and may still be only too often said,—

> 'The bookseller substantial ore repays:
> The author's fee is hunger, rags, and praise!

What a striking contrast, then, is the case of the more fortunate author of the work we are referring to! And does it not forcibly indicate what magic moral power he had come to be capable of exerting!

One of the earliest and ablest critical examinations of this last novel—last production, indeed, of any kind—from Lord Beaconsfield's pen, appeared in the classic pages of the *Quarterly Review;* where

its history, which had begun to puzzle the political quidnuncs of the clubs, was thus concisely, and we believe correctly, related:—'In the spring of last year, a statesman, who was considered by most men of education and experience to have conducted the affairs of the British Empire with patriotism and wisdom, was suddenly hurled from power. Many, doubtless, fancied that the vanquished minister must have experienced a sharp shock of chagrin; and though he retired in silence, and betook himself to Hughenden as quietly as Cincinnatus did to his Sabine farm, they concluded that he was only acting upon the principle he had once thus expounded in the House of Commons,—"I make it a point never to complain,"—and were utterly unable to persuade themselves that the dethroned statesman was not nursing in solitude a secret wound. But they are better informed now. *He was writing "Endymion!"*'

It was a happy thing for such a statesman to possess the disposition, which he so eminently did, to be, if not contented, yet complacent, 'come weal, come woe;' and it was a further happiness to have always at hand a *dernier ressort*, in which he could find at once both recreation and consolation under any care, or any vexation, that might arise to trouble him. 'The active politician,' (the able reviewer just quoted goes on to observe,) 'who in these capricious days has nothing better to fall back upon, in moments of discomfiture, than the fumes of envy, or the pangs of regret, is deeply to be commiserated. A neighbouring nation, which, precisely because the structure of its society is more democratic than our own, is visited by more frequent convulsions, and sharper vicissitudes, drove Guizot from Paris, only to transport him afresh to the Elysian fields of historical speculation. When a combination of popular discontent and royal displeasure drove Clarendon from power, the illustrious Chancellor found in the composition of his immortal history that peace which even gratified ambition cannot give, and a consolation, under the bitterest reverses, exceeding great.' Similar instances abound in national histories of the happy influence of literary resources, when political adversities, and personal mortifications, arose to wound

the heart and disturb the mind. But in Lord Beaconsfield's case, as is well pointed out, it was not, as in so many cases it has been, a new or latent expedient, but an innate faculty, cultivated and converted into a valuable acquisition. And Mr. Disraeli was a man of letters, we are reminded, 'before he was a politician; and Lord Beaconsfield has remained a man of letters after politics have given him all the honours they can confer. In the general Preface to his collected works,' as we are further reminded, 'he refers with touching simplicity to the earliest invention of his boyhood. But though he deprecates the faults of his first-born,' it is added, 'he has never disowned it, and the author of "Endymion" is but the maturer parent of "Vivian Grey." To borrow a phrase of Schiller, Lord Beaconsfield has ever held his youth in reverence. The child was, in his case, truly the father of the man; and his days have been "linked each to each" by a chain of consistent continuity. He did not use his successes as an author as mere stepping-stones to political distinction; nor did he kick away the ladder of literature by which he had mounted. Rather he drew it up after him, so that it might serve to raise and again accompany him to fresh heights of honour and usefulness.' All this is quite true; and it does honour to Lord Beaconsfield's memory to recall it. And so is the answer given to the question,—'How comes it that Lord Beaconsfield, who had for more than half a century diverted the world with the airiness of his invention, the shimmer of his wit, the originality of his ideas, and all the thousand-and-one resources of fresh and frolic genius, is transformed, when he approaches the business of life, and the functions of government, into the most hard-headed statesman of his time?'—which is thus responded to and explained:—'The author of "Endymion" has all through life rendered to Fancy the things that are Fancy's, and to Fact the things that are Fact's. He was a genuine man of letters, and yet a genuine statesman. A notable man of action, he is equally a notable man of imagination.' It was his being, in fact, 'a man of action,' that so well enabled him to write such a novel as 'Endymion.'

This fortunate combination of faculties was requisite to constitute Lord Beaconsfield the successful author of such a succession of political novels as fell from his vivacious and versatile pen. And truly does the reviewer remark, that 'a good political novel means fame and emolument;' and that 'in acquiring them from this source, the author of "Endymion" stands alone.' And, with equal truth, it is added,—'The fact will surprise no one who has properly considered the matter, and who has seriously and scrutinizingly asked what are the qualities indispensable to success. First of all, a man must have imagination of no mean order. We believe the House of Commons contains some six hundred and fifty-two gentlemen, the majority of them being men of excellent education, some of them men of great gifts, and nearly all of them of wide experience. In one sense they are supposed to be the pick of the nation. Among the six hundred and fifty-two conspicuous individuals, can a single one be named who could, with any regard for fact, be called a man of real imagination? Let us go up to the House of Lords, and look for the same *rara avis* among its some five hundred Peers. We find but three. Everybody can name them. They are Lord Beaconsfield, Lord Lytton, and Lord Houghton.' All this is irrefragable. Its argument is logical, since its facts are indisputable; so that, as the discriminative reviewer pretty decisively adds, 'The conclusion we reach is almost, if not actually this; not only that Lord Beaconsfield is the only person that has written satisfactory and successful political novels, but the only person who, by the very conditions of the case, could have written them.' And surely even this, subordinate though it may seem to be in any general estimate of Lord Beaconsfield's character, is yet a point by no means undeserving of special note in any '*Appreciative* Life' of such a British statesman.

Into any critical or even narrative exposition of 'Endymion' we shall abstain from entering; for the novel has been so recently issued, and so widely read, that the contents of it are doubtless familiar to most of the readers of these pages. That a reality attaching to some of its interesting impersonations may be discernible is thus

gracefully pointed out in the able article of the *Quarterly*, to which we have been indebted for so many of the foregoing remarks:—'Who is Myra? Who is Lady Montfort? Will-o'-the-wisps are things for fools to run after; and Lord Beaconsfield has written all his life with the profound conviction that no one writes for the wise alone. If once there was a sister who loved and believed in her brother, and who, though he misbeseemed not the promise of his spring, lived not to see him burst into fame, would it not be a clumsy and a somewhat vulgar task to disentangle reality from fancy, and say "Here was or is, where all is doubly night?" If, perchance, there once was a man in the prime of life, in the vigour of splendid and varied power, and who found in the love of a woman whom he loved the perhaps indispensable aid to his complete success, shall we with prying hands tear aside the curtain, and give name, place, and date, to spoil the charm of a grateful romance? Is it not enough to quote such a passage as the following, and then be silent?—"Lady Montfort herself had no thought but her husband. His happiness, his enjoyment of existence, his success and power in life, entirely absorbed her. The anxiety which she felt that in everything he should be master was touching. Once looked upon as the most imperious of women, she would not give a direction on any matter without his opinion or sanction. One would have supposed, from what might be observed under their roof, that she was some beautiful but portionless maiden whom Endymion had raised to wealth and power." We should have thought,' it is shrewdly added, 'this was autobiographical enough to satisfy the most curious, and touching enough to content the most sentimental,'—as so, undoubtedly, it is, or ought to be.

The brief concluding paragraph of the clever literary notice of this novel—of which we avail ourselves so advantageously, and for which we owe an obligation that we would here, before leaving it, gratefully acknowledge—is one which is invested with such an affecting interest by the mournful event that so shortly followed its publication, as to deserve being appended to what we have already given:—

'Endymion is the latest, *we trust not the last*, of Lord Beaconsfield's novels. It is different from the rest of them in many respects, but in many ways withal strikingly akin to them. It is very wise, and yet very young. Experience ripens, but imagination grows not old. One thing especially we have noted concerning "Endymion." People whom perhaps it would be unfair to describe as dull, but whom no one would think of calling brilliant, have found it dull. Interesting people have found it interesting,'—a remark that we can, from personal knowledge, most thoroughly endorse.

It was in the midst of the hearty and universal *eclat* which 'Endymion' was exciting—ere the enthusiastic congratulations with which its gifted veteran author was from all quarters greeted on its publication had ceased—that Lord Beaconsfield's fatal illness set in. 'Endymion' WAS *the latest* of his novels; the hopeful and generous trust that it would not be *the last* was not destined to be fulfilled,—nay, scarcely had it been uttered ere those 'life's last scenes' were being begun which proved the approachments to 'the valley of the shadow of death.' It had just been proudly said of him, that 'what he did at twenty-five, he was doing at seventy-five—only doing it better,' which was quite true; and that it was so deserves to be accepted as a lesson to those who are so ready, in this age of precocities and prematurities, to think all men must be in their dotage who have passed the meridian of life; utterly forgetful how generally the prudent maxim of Shakspeare's *Antonio* is verified—more especially in 'enterprises of great pith and moment'—which says, 'He cannot be a perfect man, not being tried and tutored in the world.' Lord Beaconsfield might have lived several years longer could 'the ills that flesh is heir to' but have been more carefully warded off; and what he did with his matured experience at seventy-five so much better than he did without it at twenty-five, he would not improbably, with his further experience, have done better still at eighty-five.

But during those last sad scenes, in which his strength was rapidly failing him—and this from illness rather than from old age—among

other passing incidents to cheer and to console, there was a literary undertaking communicated to him which could not fail to be felt as deeply interesting to his mind, and highly gratifying to his feelings; and the compliment of which was perhaps all the greater from his having had personally nothing whatever to do with it. We allude to the publication of a handsome volume[1] of selections from his speeches and his novels. It is stated in the Preface that 'the work was begun before Lord Beaconsfield's last illness, and that, though the manuscript was never in his hands, he expressed his approval, and looked forward to its publication with interest.'

It was a happy conception, the idea of such a volume; and that Lord Beaconsfield's popular writings and public utterances could furnish a collection of between five and six hundred extracts which are entitled to be presented as specimens of 'Wit and Wisdom,' is certainly an attestation of their worth, and their significance, of no ordinary value and interest. What we have called the *Preface* to the volume, however, is modestly stated, in its opening sentences, to be but an apology for one. 'As good wine needs no bush,' it begins, 'so words of wit and wisdom, whether falling from the lips or flowing from the pen of a great man, do not call for a Preface; and no one will gainsay the fact that Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, was one of the greatest men of the century: probably *the* greatest, when the difficulties which he had to overcome are taken into consideration. It is not given to many,' the Preface continues, 'to excel either in action or in thought; to very few, indeed, to be *facile princeps* in both, as was Lord Beaconsfield—a Janus of literature and politics; in the study a Thackeray; a Bolingbroke in the senate. But this is neither the time nor the place for panegyric. The air is still ringing with the voice of unanimous England, proclaiming the patience and the patriotism of the great statesman, extolling the eloquence of the brilliant debater, the sparkling phrases of the witty writer, who has just passed away.' This warm

[1] 'Wit and Wisdom of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield. Collected from his Writings and Speeches.'—London: Longmans, Green, & Co. 1881.

appreciation—and the warmth of it is not more deserved than it is just—is all the more valuable as being that of one who had just risen from a careful examination of all that the great statesman and popular author has spoken and written, for the purpose of a popular volume of 'Wit and Wisdom.' And the selection, we are further told, 'does not purport to be exhaustive—very far from it. It would be easy to compile other volumes equally wise and witty. The gold nearest the surface has been extracted from the rich lode, but an ample store of nuggets remains to reward the seeker.'

A specimen or two of the 'Wit and Wisdom' thus collected may not be uninteresting, or be calculated to make the Life of him from whom it proceeded less 'appreciative,' or less illustrative; and we will confine them to the selections from 'Endymion,' as appropriative evidence of the interesting and valuable nature of the latest, and the last, of his novels. *Adversity*, for instance, is thus concisely, though significantly alluded to:—'I suppose it is adversity that develops the kindly qualities of our nature. I believe the sense of common degradation has a tendency to make the degraded amiable —at least among themselves. I am told it is found so in the plantations in slave gangs.' *Character:*—'In all lives there is a crisis in the formation of character. It comes from many causes, and from some which on the surface are apparently even trivial. But the result is the same: a sudden revelation to ourselves of our secret purpose, and a recognition of our perhaps long-shadowed, but now masterful convictions.' *Liberalism:*—'An attempt to govern the country on abstract principles, which it was now beginning to be the fashion to call Liberalism. We know what it means on the Continent. It means the abolition of property and religion.' *Opposition:*—'Believe me, Opposition has its charms: indeed I sometimes think the principal reason why I have enjoyed our ministerial life so much is, that it has been, from the first, a perpetual struggle for existence.' Such are a few from 'Endymion,' which may serve as samples of the whole. For more of them we would refer the reader to the admirable collection given in 'Wit and Wisdom.' They

are virtually so many laconics. And as mere scraps of quotation they are what Dr. Johnson calls 'a good thing;' for he adds, 'there is a community of interest in it; classical quotation being the *parole* of literary men all over the world.'

Lord Beaconsfield had little or no reputation as a poet; not so much, perhaps, because poetry was not his *forte*, as from its not being altogether adapted to his public pursuits, and to the attainment of that great object of his life to which his mind was so earnestly directed. The very qualities for successful statesmanship, which he himself describes in the selected passages given of his 'Wit and Wisdom,' were not those of a poet; nor would any such constant converse with the Muses as an accomplished poet must pursue have ever, probably, improved his character as a statesman. Poetry, a poet of no mean pretensions has told us, is 'unfit, in these degenerate times,'

'To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame,'—

which, as a rule, may not improbably be true; though it has its striking exceptions. If it be true—as 'the immortal bard' himself has said it is—that 'the truest poetry is the most feigning,' it is evident that a poet would be quite out of his element in any sphere of sound practical politics, whatever he might be in any arena of party stratagems. As an element in cultivated society, or even as an influence in national life, in the creation of national greatness, and the perpetuation of national glory, poetry is often, if not always, indispensable. The lines of Pope on this point still convey, if not a great, yet an interesting truth:—

'Sages and chiefs long since had birth,
  Ere Cæsar was, or Newton named;
These raised new empires o'er the earth;
  And these new heavens and systems framed:
Vain was the chiefs', the sages' pride!
They had no poet, and they died;
In vain they schemed, in vain they bled!
They had no poet, and are dead!'

There is certainly something in this conclusion of one who was himself a great poet, and, as such, well aware of the power, and personally proud of the *prestige* of poetry. But it says nothing for either the necessity or the expediency of a statesman being poetical; and neither in political philosophy nor political history would there appear to be anything to recommend it. And yet, after all, Lord Beaconsfield was a poet; and we have already in these pages presented a specimen of his poetry, in a sonnet of at least quite average poetic merit. And we have before us while we write a collection of his poetical effusions—one from the 'Life of the Countess of Blessington,' one or two from 'The Book of Beauty,' three or four of several stanzas each, from his novel of 'Venetia,' and one from his novel of 'Henrietta Temple.' We must give a single specimen of Lord Beaconsfield's powers of versification from this collection; and we choose one that, to us, appears the most interesting of them all,—for, while it is characteristically graceful, it is touchingly affecting. It appeared in the Life of the Countess of Blessington:—

TO A BEAUTIFUL MUTE.

Tell me the star from which she fell—
    Oh! name the flower
From out of whose wild perfumed bell,
    At witching hour,
Sprang forth the fair and fairy maiden
Like a bee with honey laden.

They say that those sweet lips of thine
    Breathe not to speak:
Thy very ears that seem so fine
    No sound can seek;
And yet thy face beams with emotion,
Restless as the waves of ocean.

'Tis well. Thy face and form agree,
    And both are fair;
I would not that this child should be
    As others are:
I love to mark her indecision,
Smiling with seraphic vision

At our poor gifts of vulgar sense
That cannot stain
Nor mar her mystic innocence,
Nor cloud her brain
With all the dreams of worldly folly,
And its creature melancholy.

To thee I dedicate these lines:
Yet read them not,—
Cursed be the art that e'er refines
Thy natural lot:
Read the bright stars, and read the flowers,
And hold converse with the bowers!

We have in this chapter been dealing almost entirely with Lord Beaconsfield's distinguished career in some of its more interesting literary aspects. We had thought, indeed, to have already brought down his political career to about its close, having touched upon his principal actions during the last session of parliament in which he was permitted to take part. But whilst we are writing this present chapter, an incident has unexpectedly occurred in the House of Commons which has furnished us with information so important as an additional instance of the correct conception of his own Irish policy, and his sagacious foresight as to the effect of that antagonistic policy which, in the interests of Liberalism, has since been so rashly pursued by his successors in office, that we cannot resist the opportunity of appending it here. It was in the course of a resumed discussion in the House of Commons on the report of the address in answer to the speech from the throne, that Mr. Macartney, member for the county of Tyrone, alluding to the apologies which the Prime Minister (Mr. Gladstone) had made for the failure of his policy in Ireland, thus proceeded:—'The right hon. gentleman has said that the government were not sufficiently well acquainted with the state of Ireland for several months. If so, they must have been the only people who did not appreciate the true state of the case. The other day he happened to be talking to a large landed proprietor, who said that in December, 1880, he sent a detailed statement of the outrages and other occurrences on

his own property in Ireland to both the present Prime Minister and his predecessor, and from the latter he received the following reply:—

"HUGHENDEN MANOR,
"Dec. 16, 1880.

"Dear Sir,—I return to you the papers which you did me the honour to submit to me. I have read them with the deepest interest and equal indignation. The state of Ireland is amazing; but not so astounding as that of England, which can witness in silence the first revolution which unblushingly confesses that its object is plunder.

"I have the honour to be,
"Dear Sir, faithfully yours,
"BEACONSFIELD."

That seemed to him,' the hon. member continued, 'to be a graphic description of what was going on at the time—then more than a year ago,—a revolution which confessed that its object was plunder,—a confession that was renewed by the hon. member who had made the principal speech the night before (Mr. Sexton), and who daringly announced that he too adopted the doctrine of "No rent."'

Lord Beaconsfield's remark is indeed notable that, *amazing* though such a state of things in Ireland was, yet it was not so *astounding* as was the fact of England witnessing it in silence,—witnessing it with such apparent complacency, such comparative indifference! Why, under the indignant affectation, and artful manipulation of Liberalism, even the ingeniously exaggerated and perverted 'Bulgarian Atrocities' were made to assume an interest and importance in England far beyond anything that in Ireland, in the dreadful state it had been brought to, has, under Liberal influences, been thought worth while to be considered! To describe the object of the revolution in Ireland that was being carried on, through the ministerial policy that prevailed, as 'plunder,' was at the moment of Lord Beaconsfield's letter more prophetic, perhaps, than actual. But it only too soon became actual. And to have anticipated, so accurately as he did, its approaching realization was but another proof, to the many already on record, of Lord Beaconsfield's proverbial political sagacity. No doubt he excited in the Premier's breast all the greater aversion

towards him politically for it. Not improbably the right hon. gentleman said in his heart, as did the King of Israel of Micaiah, the son of Imla, 'I hate him, for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil.' But, if prophecy it could be called, the Prime Minister himself it was, and not Lord Beaconsfield, who was creating what it foretold. The time of this prediction was but a month or two before Lord Beaconsfield was on his death-bed. *His* opportunity, therefore, of counteracting such evils as he saw approaching was already gone for ever. He could no longer act: all he was able to do was to premonish by an assurance,—the assurance, namely, that the object which was being pursued was one of *public plunder:* an object, in fact, which was even then beginning to be 'unblushingly confessed' to be such.

'He sighed, and then prophetically spoke!'

It might almost be regarded as his dying remonstrance. But, alas! the earnest and regretful expression of it was then all that, as a dying man, it was in his power to accomplish.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

LAST SPEECHES IN PARLIAMENT.

For death gives life's last words a power to live,
And, like the stone-cut epitaph, remain
After the vanished voice, and speak to men.—*Tennyson.*

THE forebodings that were hinted at in the preceding chapter only too soon began to be fatally realized—those sad indications, we mean, of fast failing health and strength, which, early in the parliamentary session of 1881, commenced to cause such anxiety and apprehension, not to the personal friends only of Lord Beaconsfield, but to the whole Conservative party: a feeling, too, that was deeply participated in by Her Majesty the Queen, and more or less anxiously also, by all the royal family, and which created uneasiness, if not a warmer sympathy, in the courts and councils of all the powers of Europe. 'Coming events cast their shadows before;' and the two last speeches in his place in the House of Lords, though both of them still manifesting much of that mental power, that great earnestness of expression, and that emphatic energy of purpose, which almost invariably characterized his oratorical efforts on great or exciting occasions, were yet, in some respects, of ominous import. It was not that 'The solemn death-watch click'd the hour to die,' or anything else that superstitiously prognosticated death's approach. It was something infinitely, if not also appallingly, more real, more substantial, and therefore more indubitable, in its significance and in its portention,—an evident physical incapacity to exert, as he had been wont to do, those powers of the mind, and give outward expression to those emotions of the heart, which are the constituent principles of such true eloquence as he so generally displayed in his senatorial addresses. It was only, in fact, by artificial means, that on these last occasions of his earnest participation in the debates of the Upper House of Parliament, he

was enabled to make the comparatively enfeebled effort he so painfully succeeded in doing, under a strong sense of duty, though, doubtless, at the same time, under a solemn consciousness of hastening decay and incapacity: all combining to foretell 'the ending of mortality.'

The first of the occasions alluded to was the debate on the surrender of Candahar: a subject on which he would have felt keenly under any circumstances, but which, in this instance, could scarcely fail to be felt as 'the most unkindest cut of all,' seeing that the government had rashly reversed the better policy of his own administration by their most mischievous act, and thereby unwisely undone much which, under that administration, had been sagaciously done to guard effectually our Indian frontier in Afghanistan against the only too plainly purposed incursions, at no distant period, of those semi-barbarous legions which Russia has long been craftily and persistently pushing forward in that direction,—incursions which have been distinctly proved to have formed the subject of intrigue, not to say of conspiracy, with Afghanistan Ameers, and which have recently cost the Indian government serious sacrifices to resist and overcome.

It has been the practise, all along, of the Radical ministry which displaced that of Lord Beaconsfield, to represent his lordship as actuated, in his policy of resistance of Russian menace and mischief on our Afghanistan frontier, by a long fostered feeling of vengeful enmity to the imperial rule of the Czar. But nothing could be more baseless than such an idea. His previous conduct, during the most material periods of his eventful career, showed a feeling and a policy the very reverse of it. So long before as the Afghan War in 1842-43, when the ministry of the day pleaded the attitude of Russia in the neighbourhood of that frontier as an excuse for our sanguinary hostilities there, he utterly denied, in his place in parliament, the validity of any such pretext, until at length he was able to show that the foe could not be Russia, for had not Lord Palmerston himself, he asked, 'declared his confidence in the pacific intentions of Russia?' Then, again, he called to mind, 'how the noble lord opposite, the Foreign

Secretary, having distinguished himself by several remarkable despatches on this subject, and subsequently, having reason to suppose he had been misled, perhaps by erroneous information, had called Russia to account; and how Russia had explained, and the noble lord had stated that the explanations were perfectly satisfactory.' Such, we say, had over and over again been Mr. Disraeli's defence of Russia. Although, at the same time, it could not, as he showed, be concealed that the Afghan War was in a great measure to be attributed to the transfer of the trade between India and Tartary to Russia, which is considered by many who know that country well to be a result that is very likely to be repeated through the surrender of Candahar by the Gladstone ministry, along with its Indian impolicy in other respects.

Turning to an occasion much nearer the present time—that of the ill-fated, and worse conceived, Crimean War—Mr. Disraeli, so far from showing any animosity to Russia, strongly opposed the hostilities which the government had rashly engaged in against that power, declaring that the ministerial conduct had been 'marked by vacillation, perplexity, fitfulness, timidity, and occasional violence.' The public journals of that day have only to be cursorily reviewed to find innumerable evidences of all this. Speaking of the war against Russia on one occasion, Mr. Disraeli said,—'It is a coalition war. Rival opinions, contrary politics, and discordant systems have produced such vacillation and perplexity, that you are going to war with an opponent who does not want to fight, and you are unwilling to encounter him. What a mess for a great country! And this brought about by the splendid administrative talents of the Liberal and quasi-Liberal gentlemen opposite'—gentlemen who were then the wanton assailants of Russia, while Mr. Disraeli was its just and impartial defender!

But on the occasion of his last great speech but one in parliament, to which we have been referring, there was throughout a total change of circumstances, an altogether different state of things,—an utter reversal of attitudes, and change of sides. Russia, provoked,

it might well be, by the irritating vicissitudes of the Crimean War, was notoriously threatening an invasion of our Indian Empire at some convenient time and place, which was evidently thought to be not far off, and Afghanistan was being tampered with as the highway to our territory. Under Lord Beaconsfield's administration, through the efforts made to provide a 'scientific frontier,' the artful and hostile schemes of Russia were baffled, if not defeated, by a vigorous and judicious defensive policy. That policy has been most mischievously reversed by the Gladstone administration; and among other grievous illustrations of that most injudicious reversal was the surrender of Candahar, Ghasni, Balkh, and one or two other places which had long been regarded as so many 'keys of India,'—keys (if such they were) the possession of which by Russia, through its intrigues with the Afghans, would soon, it was feared, open wide the gates of our Indian frontier on the very side most accessible to Russian invaders. The debate in question, in which Lord Beaconsfield took part in the House of Lords, had special and almost exclusive reference to this; and his speech was described at the time as 'one of the most brilliant and effective he had ever delivered within the walls of either chamber of the legislature.'

It has since appeared that never before had he delivered a speech either in the House or anywhere else, under such painful personal difficulties, because such agonizing bodily sufferings. We have alluded to the necessity under which, by such sufferings he was placed, of having recourse to artificial expedients to enable him to speak at all for any reasonable time, owing to the severity of the asthmatic affection under which he laboured, and which but a few weeks afterwards terminated his existence. He had taken a precautionary restorative, and fearing its medicinal effect might pass off before he had discharged the duty he was pressed to perform, he requested Lord Granville, the Foreign Secretary, to allow him to speak at once, instead of waiting until the noble Secretary himself had taken his legitimate turn, a request with which Lord Granville most courteously and considerately complied.

That Lord Beaconsfield was right, and the Liberal cabinet that displaced him wrong, on the question of Candahar—of its vital importance to us as a highway to our Indian empire, and of the impolicy, not to say the infatuation, of its surrender—has since received but too many alarming proofs, in the advantages taken of it by those who, if not already invaders of our territory, are, it is evident, preparing so to be. While we are writing these pages, the apprehensions of those who understand, and care for, our imperial interests in India are being excited anew by some striking allusions to the case, as it now stands, by the *Quarterly Review*, in an able article on the mischievous Liberal work of less than two years of Radical government. Alluding to the Indian part of the mischief, it is observed,—'*We* have retreated in Asia, and *Russia* has advanced. Candahar had been won for us by dint of great gallantry and military skill, but it was thrown away with every expression of our contrition and shame for having gone there. "My heart bleeds," wrote Professor Vambery, "on seeing the singular indifference and credulity of many of your countrymen. I would prefer death, rather than to see how a great and free nation is brought to the brink of ruin through the carelessness of her statesmen." But Professor Vambery, Mr. Bright would say, is mad: moreover, he is a foreigner! It is not at such fires that human sympathies are to be warmed and quickened. But there are other persons, besides the great oriental Professor, who have advised us *not* to throw away Candahar. Lord Napier strongly recommended the annexation to India of the fortress, and the surrounding territory. "Who that regards the course of Russian progress," he said, "can doubt that if we are timid, apathetic, or consenting, a few years will see them in possession of a fortress which in their hands will be rendered impregnable, and will command the road to India with a facility for aggression which will be measured by Abdul Khan's rapid march to Candahar." But Lord Napier is a military man, not a statesman of the modern type; not a philosopher, agnostic or otherwise; not even a humble imitator, in the safety of a private room, of the famous "sea-green and incorruptible" revo-

lutionist of another age. He therefore was hustled out of court, and Candahar was given up, and Russian merchants have now a field opened up to them which would have been invaluable to us. "Instead of purchasing Russian articles at Peshawur," wrote Lord Napier, "we shall deliver British manufactures in Central Asia." But Radical opinion has ruled otherwise. No doubt Lord Beaconsfield had the sagacity to foresee all this mischief, as the inevitable result of a rash reversal of his Indian policy; and hence the painful intensity of his indignant emotion in remonstrating against it, in the great speech we have been referring to in the House of Lords, on the 4th March, 1881, on the following motion of Lord Lytton, the late Governor-General of India:—'That nothing in the information laid before this House justifies the announced policy of her Majesty's government in regard to Candahar.'

Lord Northbrook, as a former Governor-General, had been put forward by the Radical cabinet to bolster up a policy that was sure to be condemned by the brave peers of England, pillars of the state;' and so pitiful was the whole spirit of what was but a poor apology for that policy, as to provoke Lord Beaconsfield, at the outset of his reply to say, that one might have supposed he was not only a member of the peace-at-any-price party, but that he had graduated in that higher school which negociated while it waged war, and this with all the more timorousness, and all the more truckling, when our arms had been ingloriously defeated. And such a policy, he contended, could answer no good purpose among a people like the Afghans, who would only laugh at and despise it. He referred to the speeches of those noble lords who had preceded him, as giving reasons for the retention of Candahar to which there had been no reply. Not that the surrender of Candahar would quite disable us from preserving intact our great Indian Empire, however it might augment the cost and aggravate the difficulty of so doing. 'But I think,' he continued, 'the time has arrived when it becomes the House of Lords to express its opinion on the subject. (Hear, hear.) I do believe, for myself, that if we do not retain Candahar,

we may still be able, by a more vigorous policy, to retain our Indian Empire. (Laughter and cheers.) There are many places which are called the keys of India. There is Herat, and there is Merv—though I do not know, by the bye, whether it is taken yet. But I think I read in the newspapers that it has been taken. (Laughter.) Perhaps the First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord Northbrook) will be able to inform us on that point.' (Renewed laughter.) [The Earl of Northbrook: 'It is not a seaport.'] 'It is not a seaport! (Laughter.) Well, then, my lords, there is Ghuznee, and Balkh, and Candahar. These are called the keys of India. My opinion is that they are not. These are places in which I should with very much regret see any great military power. I should see it with regret, and with some degree of apprehension; but with a great military power there I trust we might yet be able to keep our lock. (Cheers and laughter.) Yes—I think we might; for the fact is, my lords, the key of India, after all, is not Herat, or Candahar, or Merv, or Ghuznee, or Balkh: the real key of India is London. (Cheers.) Yes; the majesty of our sovereignty, the spirit and vigour of our parliament, the inexhaustible resources of a free, an ingenious, and a determined people—these are the keys of India.' (Loud cheers.) Still, he maintained, it was wise, it was politic, to avail ourselves of local resources, and to have ever at hand the power of doing so. The fact that the influence of England could be felt on the spot was, they might be assured, the best security for peace, and consequently for economy. 'But nothing can be more erroneous,' he said in conclusion, 'nothing more mischievous, than to decry, as has been done on the other side, the opportunity which the House of Lords may occasionally take to express its opinion on a great question like this. (Hear, hear.) I do not wish in any way to maintain exaggerated views of the feeling of the country on the question of Candahar, but I believe it to be a real, deep, and increasing feeling. (Hear, hear.) I believe that every day the subject is more considered the opinion will become more matured, that our ministers are taking a rash and precipitate step in what they propose with reference to that place. And if that

be the case, then, when opinion is restless, when its absolute bias is ambiguous, what can be a more legitimate occasion for the peers of England to come forward and give the country the result of their thought and experience, and give it, as I hope they will to-night, for the maintenance of the Empire of India.' (Loud cheers.) This they did—and no doubt Lord Beaconsfield's eloquent appeal had great influence in inducing them to do so—by a majority of 165 to 76; the result being received, as the papers told the world next morning, not only with loud cheers, but with hearty laughter: cheers for the triumph of truth and wisdom, and laughter at the weakness of the ministerial resistance.

The delivery of this speech—his 'last *great* speech,' as it has been appropriately called—was marked by extraordinary earnestness, which appeared to impart to it a degree of vigour most remarkable in one who was becoming so enfeebled and disabled *physically*, though *mentally* he seemed to have lost none of his great capacity for debate. There was much to provoke and to vex him in what he had to complain of in that speech, in the reversal of a policy which had cost him, as his colleagues of the cabinet well knew, so much deep thought, and such a weight of intense anxiety. Few things in ministerial life can well be more irritating, than to find that what had been the subject of such earnest consideration, and such agitating solicitude—as that security for a scientific Indian frontier undoubtedly was—had been so completely and so wantonly scattered to the winds, when it was just beginning to answer the important purpose it was designed to serve. His very earnestness on the occasion—the keen sense of an indignity—the strong emotion it produced and displayed, —gave indisputable proof, alike of the strength of his convictions, and the depth of his mortification. It is on classic record of one of old, when in perhaps a somewhat analogous position, that he excitedly exclaimed, 'Vexation almost stops my breath!' And well might Lord Beaconsfield have so exclaimed, had he yielded to passion, instead of restraining and subduing it. Not that he was less in earnest, or was deficient in feeling, on that account; but that he had

learned at least to control, if not altogether to suppress, any agitation it might provoke. It has been said in a metaphysical essay on oratory, that 'the reason why delivery is of such force is, that unless a man appears by his outward look and gesture to be himself animated by the truths he is uttering, he will not animate his hearers. It is the live coal that kindles others, not the dead. Nay, the simple rule applies to all oratory: and what made Demosthenes the greatest of orators was, that he appeared to be the most entirely possessed by the feelings he wished to inspire.' Such was precisely, as a rule, the case with Lord Beaconsfield; and never more so than on this painfully memorable occasion of his last great speech in parliament, —though without that extravagant passion which too many, in such a case, might have found it more difficult to restrain. It was happily described in one of the daily journals at the time as a 'splendid and patriotic burst of eloquence in vindication of the argument for the retention of Candahar.' And this remark was at once illustrated and emphasized by adding to it the following affecting incident—which, on high authority, we have had related to us—namely, that 'immediately before delivering that speech he had to take a precautionary restorative against the asthmatic affection by which he was then in a modified form tormented, and to the serious aggravation of which he was in little more than a month afterwards to succumb. Remembering this,' continues the account, 'who that listened to his utterances, as we did upon that occasion, can call to mind otherwise than with emotion the thrill of enthusiasm which passed through the House at his articulation of that most impressive and impassioned passage already referred to, when he said,—"My lords, the key of India, after all, is not Herat, or Candahar, or Merv, or Ghuzni, or Balkh, that are also said to be the keys of India." Then, pausing for a moment, and drawing himself up to his full height, "the real key of India, my lords," he exclaimed, "is London—in the majesty of our sovereignty, in the spirit and vigour of our parliament, and in the inexhaustible resources of a free, an ingenious, and a determined people; they are the keys of India." 'The burst

of cheers,' it is added, 'which greeted these patriotic words still rings in our recollection. Six weeks and five days only have since elapsed, and the voice that uttered them is hushed for ever—and Candahar is abandoned!'

A correspondent who was in the House during the debate furnished to the newspapers at the time some further interesting details, which are worthy of reproduction here:—'It was my privilege,' he writes, 'to hear the last great speech which he ever delivered, and the thought occurred to me that the leader of the Tory party was not the man he had been. He sat for hours on the front Opposition bench looking extremely ill and seemingly listless. It was the night of the Candahar debate. He rose about eleven o'clock, and spoke for three-quarters of an hour. About the third of that time at the beginning of his speech he did not exactly lose the thread of his discourse, but he expressed himself with obscurity—one of the things that Lord Beaconsfield never did previously. In the particular passages where he had occasion to refer to Count Schouvaloff, it was with the greatest difficulty that his sentences were comprehensible, and the passages gave the reporters considerable trouble. Three times he had occasion to refer to the year 1878. On the first occasion he said 1838. Lord Salisbury said *sotto voce* 1878. He accepted the correction, but almost immediately afterwards, having occasion to refer to the same year, he again said 1838. On this occasion Viscount Cranbrook corrected him, but a third time he adhered to 1838 instead of 1878. This indicated a slightly defective memory. During the same speech, having occasion to refer to Viscount Cranbrook, he said, "My right hon. friend the member for——" when he suddenly stopped, and said, "the noble viscount near me." His memory seemed in these little lapses to be in the past. Notwithstanding these little defects he pulled himself together with that indomitable will of his, and for the closing twenty minutes of his speech he spoke with all his wonted fire and vigour. It was in this speech that he used the phrase the "frenzy of the hustings." It was also in this speech that he told the House that the key of

India was London, but that it was not wise thus to draw on the arterial resources of a great empire. After the division his lordship walked to the Treasury bench, forgetful for the moment that he was in Opposition. Lord Cairns, who was near him, took him by the arm, and led him to the front Opposition bench. Lord Beaconsfield saw his mistake, and laughed heartily. These little things are remembered now, as giving us some indication that he was getting old.'

The other remarkable speech,—also great in its subject, though of brief duration, but of peculiar and very melancholy interest as his *very last*,—was on the motion for an address to her Majesty conveying an expression of the indignation and deep concern with which their lordships had learned the assassination of her Majesty's relation and ally, the Czar. And it is a speech that has especial claims to be given in full, which its comparative brevity allows us to do conveniently; while its intrinsic value is such as to justify, nay, to demand, its being thus placed in its entirety on permanent record in pages such as these:—

'My Lords,—I am sure your lordships will express your most respectful sympathy to her Majesty the Queen in the affliction that has fallen upon her. The relations between this country and the Emperor Alexander II.—the most benevolent Prince that ever filled the throne of Russia—were of a peculiar nature; and they cannot rank among the ordinary ones which exist between sovereigns. Between her Majesty and the Emperor there existed ties of intimate and life-long friendship, strengthened by domestic relations of great felicity and satisfaction. This friendship, although it had to endure, by the ordinance of Providence, great trials, was one which on more than one occasion was exercised by both sovereigns for the welfare of the two countries. The horrible murder of a Prince and an ally, of a connection so near and dear, must very greatly have agitated her Majesty. It has disturbed the feelings of all Europe—Europe which is, as one nation, alarmed and indignant. But of all countries of Europe I know none, not even Russia itself, that can have heard of this terrible catastrophe with greater horror and greater sympathy than our own. The Emperor of Russia had one daughter, to whom he was passionately attached, and who returned to him an admiration quite equal to his own. That daughter is now a Princess of England. It seems to be only yesterday that in the festivities of her marriage we beheld with pride and gratification the simplicity of her carriage and the naturalness of her demeanour. *Her* woe must be very great. My lords, I know that in a sorrow like this consolation is entirely impossible; but though solace be out of the question, sympathy for our Sovereign and her suffering child will have a voice, especially when it comes from this illustrious and ancient House.' (Cheers.)

This graceful feeling, and altogether admirable expression, not of his own sympathy merely, but of that of the august assembly for which he spoke, was delivered, we believe, under an agony of asthmatic oppression and physical debility. But for this, it might have been of greater length, and still more eloquent, though it could scarcely have been more effective,—certainly not in better taste, or more to the point, or of warmer feeling. And, what above all else has made it memorable, it was, let us repeat, *his last speech of all.* This was on Tuesday, the 15th of March. He was in the House again on the Thursday following, but had no occasion to speak; and he was there again on the Friday, and briefly asked two questions of Lord Granville respecting the evacuation of Candahar by the British troops. After that, alas! they 'saw his face no more' where his presence reflected so much honour, and where his words of wisdom and of warning had but recently, as so often before, instructed and edified the great council of the nation. There is no reason to suppose that either he himself or any of the noble lords then present had any apprehension whatever that it was a final leave-taking of his parliamentary career—a farewell, a long farewell to all his greatness there,—'farewell at once, for once, for all, and ever!'

These two speeches—the 'last dying speeches,' one might almost call them, of an eventful and most honourable public life—looking at them thoughtfully, and not superficially, evidently correspond in principle, and in their object, with the conceptions, the motives, and the purposes which, all throughout his public career, distinguished Mr. Disraeli's political conduct. It must be admitted that a spirit of patriotism pervaded all his views, and inspired all his policy—that patriotism which the poet so emphatically apostrophises when he exclaims,—

> 'Statesman, yet friend to truth! of soul sincere,
> In action faithful, and in honour clear!'

And although Lord Beaconsfield was not a Briton by race, or descent, or lineage, he was by birth and by adoption; and, what is far more, by moral acclimation and mental training. He was one, moreover,

who nobly and signally attested his patriotism by his public services to his country. He himself once declared, in his place in parliament, that 'patriotism depends as much on mutual suffering as on mutual success, and that it is by such experience of all fortunes, and all feelings, that a great national character is created.'[1] Proved by this test even, his patriotism could be shown to have been of no ordinary quality. His love of England, as his country, has had many striking illustrations in his writings, as well as practical evidences in his speeches; as, for instance, when in one of the more popular, because, perhaps, less political of his novels, he thus devotedly apostrophises it:

'Oh, England! Oh, my country! not in hate I left thee—not in bitterness am I wandering here. My heart is thine, although my shadow falls upon a foreign strand; and although many an Eastern clime and Eastern race have given me something of their burning blood, it flows for thee! I rejoice that my flying fathers threw their ancient seed on the stern shores which they have not dishonoured. I am proud to be thy child. Thy noble laws have fed with freedom a soul that ill can brook constraint. Among thy hallowed hearths I own most beautiful affections. In thy abounding tongue my thoughts find music; and with the haughty fortunes of thy realm my destiny would mingle. What! though the immortal glory which here shoots forth throughout the tombs of empires bathes with no lambent gleams thy immemorial cliffs, still there we proudly witness the more active sublimity of great and growing empire. What Rome and Carthage were, thou art, conjoined, my country!'[2]

There were other last things, besides last speeches, which the time had come for Lord Beaconsfield to do,—and to do, no doubt, unconsciously as to their being *the last:* a circumstance which, of course, must happily have deprived them of the melancholy feeling that would otherwise have been affecting, if not afflicting. For the consciousness of performing any pleasant duty, or any friendly courtesy—nay, often any ordinary act—for the last time, cannot but have, more or less, a painfully depressing influence on any sensitive mind. Parting, it is true, is said sometimes to be 'sweet sorrow.' But to part, knowing it will be *for ever*, must, in the world at least, as a rule, be much more sorrowful than sweet. And a last social duty and enjoyment of a kind that he was able to perform, and to be gratified with, is so simply yet touchingly spoken of by one

[1] Speech on 'International Law,' March 18th, 1862. [2] 'The Young Duke.'

who could write of him with all that regard which a close personal acquaintance could inspire, that we cannot do otherwise than give the brief allusion to it in the writer's own words:—'A short time before the last illness, he gathered round him one evening some friends who may pardon the mention of their names, as a proof that he never permitted politics to interfere with friendships. The Duke and Duchess of Sutherland, Lord and Lady Granville, Lord and Lady Spencer, Lady Chesterfield, Lady Dudley, Lady Lonsdale, Lord and Lady Barrington, Lord and Lady Cadogan, Lord Bradford, Mr. Alfred de Rothschild, Sir Frederick Leighton, and Mr. Henry Manners, dined with him. It is agreeable to think that he was able to enjoy their society, and till the last he seemed to retain the happy faculty of finding pleasure in the young and beautiful, as well as in those whose minds are fixed on mighty interests. This dinner-party—*his last*—was the only one he gave in the house in Curzon Street.' *His last!* Little, perhaps, did either he or any of his guests expect it would be *his last!* Yet so it was. And not only his last dinner-party, but, to nearly all of them, we believe, the last time they ever saw him. Yes; with but two exceptions, perhaps, 'they saw his face no more;' though no possibility so painful as this would cross their minds, for the close of his valuable and much valued life was not then thought to be so near at hand. Their leave-taking would, of course, be as cordial and kind as usual, yet full of hope, if not of confidence, that it was only as before, 'to meet again.' And when that mournful though unconscious illusion was so soon and so fatally dispelled, their sorrowful and perhaps startling reflections might not improbably, in thought, if not in utterance, be such as have been with so much right feeling expressed in the not altogether unfamiliar or inappropriate exclamation:—

> 'What! gone without a word?
> Ay, so true friendship should do! It cannot speak:
> For truth hath better deeds than words to grace it!'

The house in Curzon Street where that, *his last*, dinner-party was given, had but recently been entered upon. Lord Beaconsfield

was, as we have had occasion to show, after his sudden and abrupt removal from the official residence in Downing Street, left without a town house—without a home, therefore, in this vast metropolis where for more than half the year public duty required him to reside. 'His friends rejoiced,' says the amiable and accomplished chronicler of his later years, whom we delight in having been specially permitted to quote, 'when he again became possessed of a house in London, where he could gather them round him, and where his papers and his books would be collected and arranged.' 'He was fortunate,' it is added, 'in finding one near the site of Chesterfield House, where he must have passed so many brilliant evenings in former times. He secured the lease for nine years; and in mentioning this to a friend, he added, with his own peculiar smile, "That, I think, will see me out." He took pleasure,' we are further told, 'in the arrangement of his new abode. Glowing colours, he always felt, counteracted the depressing influence of our grey skies. Oriental carpets, and delicate light woods, made his surroundings cheerful.'[1] But this was not long to be. His lease of life, though he knew it not, was much too near its termination, to have made it necessary to secure any lease at all for an earthly abode, and one that was to be so temporary, could he only have foreseen it. It is, perhaps, often wisely and mercifully ordained that we do not—too distinctly, at least—foresee such things. It cannot but be considered so, at any rate, by those who tell us that

'The sense of death is most in apprehension.'

It was here, however, as it will become our melancholy duty to relate—here, in his new abode, this house in Curzon Street, so comfortably, so elegantly, so luxuriously provided for him to live in, that he shortly became apprehensive he had come, not long to live, but only too soon to die in; where the bed of death was already, though unknowingly, prepared; and where he was to realise the warning words of a great philosopher and moralist, and one who himself was famous and eminent in public life, when he says,—'One

[1] Lady John Manners's 'Personal Recollections.'

may *live* as a conqueror, a king, or a great statesman; but he must *die* as a man. The bed of death brings every human being to his pure individuality. Here it is that fame and renown cannot assist us; that all external things must fail to aid us; that even friends, affection, and human love and devotedness, cannot succour us.'[1]

Lord Beaconsfield could be no exception to this. *His* 'bed of death,' without any doubt, 'brought him to his pure individuality.' Great statesman though, most unquestionably, he was, he, too, had to 'die as a man.' Nor did he 'linger with a long delay.' He himself had said aforetime,—it is left on record among those aphoristic creations so thickly scattered alike throughout his writings and his speeches, and in the art of which it may so truly be said he was *facile princeps*,—'Departures should be sudden:' solemnly, yet not abruptly so, even from life itself, and from the world, with all its sublunary surroundings, in which that life has been spent: '*if only we are prepared to depart.*' For, as a great sage of antiquity has not inaptly declared, 'Death itself is less painful when it comes upon us unawares, than the bare contemplation of it, even when danger is far distant.' And we are led to believe, on the well-assured authority of the same noble lady whose 'Personal Recollections' of his later years have furnished us with various interesting and touching incidents, that such was very much Lord Beaconsfield's fortunate case. Not but that the asthmatic attacks he had were more or less significant forebodings. Yet they would not seem to have disturbed either his general serenity or his usual vivacity. 'He did not wish his friends to know of these attacks of semi-suffocation,' we are told, 'though occasionally they made those about him very anxious. . . . He expressed a wish to be told if his case was hopeless, saying, "Death should be met boldly." From the time of his last attack his own feeling was that he should not recover, and he rather urged his physicians to take his own view of the case.' In all this he was, even 'in the hour of death,' we see, practically illustrating his own sentiments, and confirming his own sense of duty. And who

[1] Daniel Webster.

can deny that *duty* was, with him, if not a 'ruling passion,' yet a controlling principle, and that thus, as we perceive, it was indeed 'strong in death.'

There is an allusion of Lord Beaconsfield's to the deaths of distinguished characters, like himself, in his 'Life of Lord George Bentinck,' which has a peculiar though a mournful interest in connection with the more melancholy circumstances of his own grievous case, and not less memorable, or less elucidative, assuredly, than that of any to which his remark might apply. 'They say,' he observes, 'that when great men arise they have a mission to accomplish, and do not disappear until it is fulfilled. Yet this is not always true. After all his deep study, and his daring action, Mr. Hampden died on an obscure field, almost before the commencement of that mighty struggle which he seemed born to direct.' Might not this last remark be pointed with peculiar propriety and force, we ask, to the fate of Lord Beaconsfield himself? He, it was apparent, had 'a mission to accomplish,' and one which, most undeniably, he did *in part* very successfully perform. But, in his case, as in the other, when a 'mighty struggle arose which he seemed born to direct,' he, like Hampden, was not permitted to live and encounter it. What more truly or more appropriately could one, with all due reverence, say of it, than what the poet has expressed in his immortal verse,—

> 'This is Thy work, Almighty Providence!
> Whose power, beyond the stretch of human thought,
> Revolves the orbs of empire: bids them sink
> Deep in the dead'ning night of Thy displeasure,
> Or rise majestic o'er a wondering world!'

But to return, for a brief moment or two, to the still more personal, and scarcely less melancholy, incidents of that 'approach of death,' the visible aspects, as well as the inward consciousness of which, came to be no longer questionable; though, mercifully, the sufferer's own apprehensions were but of short duration. It is observed in the 'Personal Recollections' from which we have already derived information that is of undeniably authentic though of painfully pensive

interest, that 'perhaps one of the most striking proofs of the courageous spirit in which he bore his sufferings, and combated the feeling of exhaustion that at times overwhelmed him, may be found in the fact, that it was only at a very late period of his illness that he said to Lord Barrington, "The time has come when I must ask you to write to the Duke of Portland, to tell him it will be impossible for me to keep my engagement to spend Easter-week at Welbeck." A few days before he had corrected the proofs of one of his last speeches, observing, "He did not wish to go down to posterity as using bad grammar."'

It would scarcely have been possible for him to have had his bed of sickness surrounded with greater comforts — with more of everything, in fact, which this world could afford, to 'soothe the dull cold ear of death'—than were to be found in his elegant mansion in Curzon Street. And there, too, he enjoyed to a degree which could nowhere else have been exceeded, those anxious, and in certain respects, endearing attentions of his 'troops of friends,' which, almost more than anything else that the world could bestow, must ever contribute a powerfully and gratefully soothing influence when on the bed of sickness, and of approaching dissolution.

And no doubt it might be more soothing, in some respects, to have the enjoyment, thus consciously of gratitude, and thus sensibly of respect, from such quarters, and where there were such facilities for conveying them, than it would have been to be in a more distant place where no such tokens of warm affection and grateful regard could have had the same opportunities for being bestowed. Yet there is reason to believe that Lord Beaconsfield would himself have preferred a still calmer, less distracting, and more undisturbed situation for the solemn scene of departure to that mercifully destined everlasting rest, 'when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality.'

It was well understood, we believe, that Lord Beaconsfield had always pleasingly contemplated his dying amid the rural calm, and quiet serenity—heightened, not to say sanctified, by so many beauteous

surroundings of scenery and circumstance, in which nature stands out supreme—of his beloved Hughenden. The native stillness and natural beauteousness of such a spot he sensitively appreciated as more truly in accord with so awful a solemnity as death. As an American writer of note[1] has graphically described it:—'There is something exquisitely touching in the tolling of a church-bell amid the silence of the country. It communicates for miles round the message of mortality. The ploughman stops his horse to listen to the solemn tidings; the housewife remits her domestic occupations, and sits with the needle idle in her fingers, to ponder who it is that is going to the long home; and even little, thoughtless children, playing and laughing their way from school, are arrested for a moment in their evening gambols by those sounds of melancholy import, and cover their heads as they go to rest.' Such affecting thoughts have, comparatively speaking, little as yet to excite them in his own land, and they are so peculiarly true of England, that the 'early recollections,' which we are further told they are, must doubtless have been those of English life—most probably of English childhood: significantly showing how deep and lasting must be the impressions such hallowed and hallowing customs of our country are calculated to produce, and which in this instance, wafted across the Atlantic, cannot but heighten our sympathy with them, as being so evidently those of one who could truly say, as another Anglo-American worthy has feelingly sung—

> 'Old isle and glorious—I have heard
> Thy fame across the sea,
> And know my fathers' homes are thine,—
> My fathers rest with thee.'[2]

Such reflections have a benign influence, how much soever they may be derided by the obdurate stoics or heartless utilitarians of the day. But Lord Beaconsfield, as we have endeavoured to show, was none of these.

It is possible that Lord Beaconsfield would have liked his death to have been at Hughenden, deprived even though it might thereby

[1] Paulding. [2] Bishop Coxe's 'Christian Ballads.'

have been of the 'pride, pomp, and circumstance,' that so legitimately and so deservedly accompanied it in Curzon Street; and would have liked, would have preferred it for this solemn and significant reason, if none other,—

'God made the country, and man made the town.'

There are those, we are not unaware, who will regard all this as mere sentimentality. But such sentimentality has a virtuous and pious significance in it, notwithstanding; and one which, even in political life, is not to be despised, and which Lord Beaconsfield himself both appreciated and applauded. Not that its indulgence could ever assuage, or even abate, let alone suppress, the universal sorrow felt for the country's bereavement in the loss of so sagacious a statesman, and sincere a patriot, at so critical a moment. Nor has time—as yet, at least—done anything to relieve or to repress the keen sense of that bereavement. In the toils and troubles of the state that have already, at the hands of other and adverse counsellors, been so disastrously inflicted, *his* skilful hand has been wanting, if not to prevent, yet to restrain—his eloquent voice has not been heard to expose and denounce them. 'Give sorrow words,' it has been significantly said. And why? Because, 'the grief that does not speak, whispers the o'erfraught heart, and bids it break.' And how much has there not occurred, and is still occurring in this realm, to illustrate such a sentiment!

CHAPTER XXXVII.

ILLNESS AND DEATH.

'God's finger touched him, and he slept.'—*Tennyson.*

THE incidents of Lord Beaconsfield's eventful life related in the preceding chapter did not on the instant, perhaps, create that alarm which, on looking back upon them, it would seem they might not unreasonably have excited. No doubt he struggled manfully against the painful and ominous symptoms of his case; and no medicinal means were left untried, and for a time with some success, to relieve and to support him. Immediately after the two last memorable speeches in the House of Lords, that we have been describing, he rallied for a while, so much so as to be enabled to dine with the Prince of Wales at Marlborough House—and this for the last time. If we mistake not, it was, indeed, the last time also that he was able to dine out at all; and not many days afterwards he began to be confined to his house, and, in the course of a day or two, to his room. Piercing east winds prevailed which could not be entirely kept out of his otherwise comfortable mansion, and their baneful influence aggravated his asthmatic affection severely, and contributed materially to impair his general health. Such was the discouraging state of things when the 'ides of March' passed hopelessly away—that ominous period of which it is on ancient legendary record the soothsayers used to bid the world beware; and April brought little or no abatement of the ungenial weather's inclemency, or any improvement in the distinguished patient's state. His case, in fact, now became alarming; and the excitement in the public mind increased accordingly. Seldom has the illness of a sovereign, let alone of a subject, created so deep an interest, or caused such anxious concern, among all classes of society, as did

this now serious sickness of Lord Beaconsfield. Nor was it confined to the metropolis by any means. The nation at large became deeply agitated, and its emotion kept increasing as the daily, and often almost hourly bulletins became, if not more unfavourable, yet certainly less hopeful. The sympathetic solicitude of the Queen was manifested not only in constant anxious inquiries, but by many marked attentions and suggestions, for the interesting sufferer's relief, and, as it was continued to be hoped, eventual recovery. At her Majesty's express desire further medical attendance was called in, and supplementary assistance was supplied from the Court. The assiduous attention of Lord Barrington was especially remarkable, and elicited, we understand, the cordial commendations of the Sovereign. The intense excitement that prevailed throughout the metropolis was strikingly shewn in Curzon Street, not only by the incessant roll of the carriages of the aristocracy, calling to make inquiries, or obtain copies of the bulletins, but by the crowds of people, of all sorts and conditions, that thronged the street from morning to night with a similar object; and it was remarked as a gratifying feature in the prevalent concern and solicitude that some of the apparently most anxious faces in the general throng were those of the working classes, who had long recognised the suffering object of their present solicitude as their sincere friend in his public life. Ere long, the calls to enquire as to his lordship's state became so continuous, all through the day, and even till late at night, that it was found necessary to affix copies of the bulletins outside the door; and there was generally a crowd all around eager to scan them. Such a sight had seldom, if ever, been seen before,—for the street was never empty. But even the expedient referred to did not much diminish the calls—at any rate of the upper classes, generally in their carriages; many of whom, of the more privileged, as personal friends, and others of high social position—members of the royal family, more especially—alighted in order to learn more in detail the real condition of the patient. Lord Rowton, long the devoted and respected private secretary of Lord Beaconsfield, was

unfortunately abroad when the case became so serious; but a telegraphic message called him home just in time to give his most anxious and most affectionate parting attentions in the sick-room, which he never left until all was over. These attentions, though unavailing,—as, indeed, all the medical skill and nursing care that was bestowed on the sufferer unhappily proved—yet were a great comfort to Lord Beaconsfield to receive.

All hope was not quite gone when Easter day drew near: completing a period of scarcely a month's confinement,—was not quite gone from his own mind, at least, though fast departing, we believe, from that of his medical attendants.

But there was soon after this an unfavourable change in the patient's condition, which greatly increased the alarm his physicians had begun to feel. One or other of them was now constantly with him, and they had consultations together at intervals during the day, and even at night. Lord Barrington continued incessantly in attendance, and Lord Rowton seldom left the bedside of his dying friend. The arrangements for preserving the utmost quiet in the house were enforced more strictly than ever; as the necessity for them became so much greater, owing to the tidings of his lordship's more alarming condition having had the effect of augmenting the calls of deeply disquieted inquirers.

The last two or three days of his life were emphatically those of a sacred season, and, to him and all those around him, days of no ordinary solemnity. It was the Christian festival of Easter that drew near. He had during the previous week become fully aware of his dying state, and evinced the utmost and calmest resignation. The solemn decree, 'What thou art, resign to death,' was, as it well became him, unmurmuringly and reverently submitted to. 'Having availed himself of every means of recovery, he left the result to a higher power.' Such, we are told, was the humble expression of his submission. The constantly recurring feeling of exhaustion, together with the asthmatic difficulty that had become so distressing, painfully hindered his utterance of evidently serious and sacred words he

appeared desirous of repeating. Once or twice, it is stated, he succeeded in saying solemnly, though not without difficulty, and with becoming emotion, that he was 'not afraid to die.'

It was on Tuesday in Easter week that he at length expired, surrounded by those stedfastly devoted friends who had affectionately watched over and ministered to him during his severest sufferings, never leaving him until all was over; and they, along with the thousands and tens of thousands by whom he was beloved, esteemed, and honoured, were left to mourn that irreparable loss to them and to their country, which yet to him was 'great gain.' The newspapers gave to the world the following interesting and touching details of his last hours:—'Gout becoming fully developed brought relief to the asthma, and it was thought that with the milder weather that might reasonably have been anticipated with the incoming of April, the noble earl would once again be enabled to take an active part in the public affairs of the country. But these expectations were doomed not to be realised. The drowsiness which had been apparent in the later part of Monday night gradually deepened towards midnight into a stupor, from which his lordship was with difficulty aroused. He still, however, took nourishment up to half-past one on Tuesday morning. About two o'clock the stupor deepened into coma, or complete insensibility, and towards three o'clock the breathing became very much embarrassed. Dr. Kidd and Dr. Bruce at once applied all the usual restoratives for the breathing, but, for the first time during his illness, there was no response. Seeing the approach of death, Dr. Kidd immediately despatched messengers to Lord Barrington, Sir Philip Rose, and Dr. Quain. Lord Barrington was the first to arrive, and upon entering the sick room he found Lord Rowton closely grasping the right hand of the distinguished patient, in which grasp Lord Barrington joined. The two noble lords continued to clasp the right hand of Lord Beaconsfield until the last moment, the left being all the time held in that of Dr. Kidd. About five minutes before the breathing ceased Sir Philip Rose and Dr. Quain arrived. Then a most placid appearance came over his lordship's face, which

deeply moved all in the room. The distressing breathing ceased, and for about five minutes a slow, gentle inspiration took its place, and all seemed over, but even after the breathing had stopped for four or five minutes the heart's action kept up, and the pulse continued perfectly perceptible at the wrist. It was a most touching scene as Lord Rowton, Lord Barrington, the three physicians, Mr. Baum, the young servant James, and the two nurses watched round the bed for a further ten minutes. Perfect silence was kept, save for the weeping of some who were present, because even when the pulse ceased it was difficult to realise that he was dead. Then, without suffering, without a struggle, Lord Beaconsfield's life slowly passed away at half-past four o'clock.' And thus—

> 'He gave his honours to the world again,
> His blessed part to Heaven, and slept in peace.'

Under such circumstances, one cannot but concur in the pious reflection which the 'Personal Recollections' thus touchingly conveys, —that, 'Remembering he was willing to live, yet not afraid to die, and remembering that, to him of all men, a life of enforced inactivity would have been the heaviest of trials, his friends may take comfort in the thought that no long dreary twilight preceded the close of that life in which so much had been accomplished.'[1]

That Lord Beaconsfield had that due and earnest sense of religion, as a personal affair, without which all profession of Christianity must be very much a delusion and a snare, cannot, we think, for a moment be questioned by those who take a just, and unprejudiced, and charitable view of his life and character. In many of his speeches and his writings there is incontestible evidence of this; while the fact is practically attested by much that he *did*, as well as *said*, whether in his public career, or in his private position. That it was not more demonstrative—that it was never, in fact, ostentatious—would be no justification whatever of a contrary and less charitable conclusion; while there were evidently, as we have seen, circumstances

[1] Lady John Manners's 'Personal Recollections.' An interesting little brochure which all admirers of the Earl should procure.

of physical suffering and incapacity in his dying hours that may fairly account for the apparently slight outward and visible signs of it to those who were with him, when not only conversation, but the feeblest intelligible speech on his part was most difficult—nay, almost impossible.

It is a most interesting and affecting subject to remark upon, although in many respects, we are well aware, a most delicate one. Not only is it one of deep interest, but it has a vital importance, involving, as it may do, so solemnly and so affectingly, a dying testimony to an eternal truth, in which we have all a common concern, and the influence of which, politically, as well as morally, but, above all, personally, one that must affect, in no ordinary degree, the highest interests of society, and the utmost welfare of a nation. Besides—

> 'Tis thus "the actions of the just,"
> When memory hath enshrined them,
> E'en from the dark and silent dust
> Their odour leave behind them.'

The death-beds of great men have, on these accounts, been generally acknowledged as subjects of great public interest, and often of the highest public importance. And amongst many that might be adduced as conveying a solemn political as well as moral lesson, was that of another and not less eminent and virtuous statesman than Lord Beaconsfield, whose dying testimony was borne, though not, perhaps, altogether under such consolatory circumstances, to that same eternal truth which must ever lie at the foundation of all human happiness. 'When William Pitt's latter end drew near,' it is related in his biography, 'his physicians—as too many physicians in such cases unfortunately do—forbade any one to speak to him on subjects which might tend to agitate his mind. But at last,' the account continues, 'the Bishop of Lincoln, who had for some time been in almost constant attendance on Mr. Pitt, obtained permission to intimate to him his dangerous state, and call his attention to religious duties. The Bishop went to his bedside, and communicated to him the melancholy tidings. On hearing them, Mr. Pitt turned

to Sir Walter Farquhar, his physician, and with the most perfect composure asked, "How long do you think I have to live?" In answer to the Bishop's request that he might be permitted to pray with him, and administer the Holy Sacrament, he said, "I fear I have, like too many other public men, neglected prayer too much to have any ground for hope that it can be efficacious on a death-bed; but," rising as he spoke, and clasping his hands with the utmost fervour and devotion, "I throw myself *entirely*"—the last word being pronounced with a strong emphasis—"upon the mercy of God, through the merits of Christ." The Bishop then said the prayers prescribed, and Mr. Pitt joined in them with calm and humble piety. He repeatedly expressed, in the strongest manner, his sense of his own unworthiness to appear in the presence of God, disclaiming all idea of merit; but, with a conscience evidently clear and undisturbed, that he was perfectly resigned to the will of God, that he felt no enmity towards any one, but died in peace with all mankind, and expressed his hope, at once humble and confident, of eternal happiness through the intercession of his Redeemer.'[1]

Though opportunity did not, unfortunately, enable Lord Beaconsfield to evince so expressively or so emphatically a similar attestation, yet there is no doubt he had the same pious because humble assurance, together with the same deep sense of unworthiness, and the same perfect faith and resignation.

The death of Lord Beaconsfield was an event that agitated the public mind, not of the United Kingdom only, but more or less, of every state in Europe, of every British colony, of every part of Great Britain's vast Indian Empire, and, in a scarcely less degree than if our American dominions had included the American Commonwealth, all throughout those wide-spread United States of America, the great bulk of the people of which still look affectionately towards this United Kingdom as their 'mother country.' Different opinions, of course, would everywhere prevail as to his character as a politician,

[1] Bingley's 'Biographica.'

and his conduct as a statesman. But there could be but little difference of opinion as to his great eminence as a public man, and his distinguished merits as the successful architect of his own high fame and brilliant fortunes.

The sad tidings of the great statesman's death did not become generally known in the metropolis until the forenoon of Easter Tuesday, and as the railway trains kept bringing in their carriages full of passengers, returning from their Easter holiday-making in all parts of the country, intense became the excitement at the various metropolitan stations, on their seeing posted up in large letters at the newspaper-stands, 'DEATH OF LORD BEACONSFIELD.' Crowds collected, and groups of people of all classes, in grave and often tearful converse, gathered there all throughout the day, evidently absorbed in the one great and mournful subject of so melancholy yet memorable an occasion. And it was much the same in every other place of public resort. The clubs of every character and complexion, political and social, were agitated all day long by the exciting topic. It was one that, in all directions, threw every other into the shade. And it may be said with considerable truth that, with very partial, and by no means very respectable exceptions, the public mind of London—as, indeed, it soon appeared, of every other part of the kingdom—was sincerely and deeply affected by the mournful event. Nor, we believe, was the public mind generally quite prepared to expect it, much reason though there undoubtedly was to apprehend that the sad catastrophe could not be far off. It was manifestly a severe shock to many, perhaps to most, who heard the fatal news as it circulated with startling rapidity throughout society at large, and doubtless called forth in many an anxious mind the sentiment—if not the exclamation itself—once, on a similar exciting occasion, so aptly and passionately expressed in elegiac verse,—

> 'And is the meteor gone which, whilst it shone,
> Illumin'd half the horizon?'[1]

[1] 'Elegy on the Death of Napoleon I.'

Everywhere, it soon became apparent, was he regarded as such a meteor, who had just passed away. The testimony that came to hand from every quarter virtually testified that there could be no extravagance in thus describing it, not from every part of the United Kingdom merely, or from every British colony, or every district of our Indian Empire only, but from every country of Europe, from the Republic of America, and from every civilised place in Africa, as well as Asia,—in every instance it was evident that such was the prevalent, the popular impression. The public press of foreign countries, as well as our own, did more or less justice to his distinguished character, and acknowledged his established worthiness and greatness. The truthful, though somewhat quaint words of one of our own daily journals, we well remember, struck us forcibly at the time, from the circumstance of its being one of, generally speaking, a neutral tint of politics, and as such remarkable for its political impartiality. 'England,' it said, 'has lost one of the greatest statesmen she has known since the days of the younger Pitt; a statesman who, by reason of his being a head and shoulders above his contemporaries, has enjoyed for half a century the privilege of being the best abused man of the time, and who has been accused of nearly every crime in the political decalogue. Posterity will probably do him justice; but at a period when excessive talk is thought to be the first qualification for the ruler of a great nation, it is possible that one whose merit it has been that he knew how to wait, and how to keep silence in case of need, may pass away without his merits being appreciated as they should be,'—a not ungenerous, and at a moment, perhaps, when such 'excessive talk' was apparently in the ascendant, not altogether unreasonable apprehension; but certainly not one which what has since occurred gives any appearance of being realized.

Another highly respectable public journal, and one not only not on Lord Beaconsfield's side in politics, but strongly on the opposite side, thus generously, and we believe conscientiously, gave expression to its independent estimation of his personal character:—'Lord Bea-

consfield, whatever his faults, had many of the qualities which win affection. There never was a stauncher friend, or one more honourably solicitous to requite a service rendered to him. There was always an element of forbearance in his most calculated invective, and a freedom from political prepossession went side by side with freedom from political hate. Although eager for political power, he was never jealous of his friends' advancement; and, amongst the good things to be set down to his praise, is the encouragement he was always ready to give to unrecognised merit. He fought the game fairly, and even generously, as he understood it; and gratitude, which is better than admiration, will follow him. Now that he is gone we can afford to be tender to his memory; and those who are least inclined to think well of him must remember that eminence such as he achieved is not to be acquired by vulgar qualities and a merely personal ambition. It is not his credit only which would suffer, if it were possible to play unrewarded so large a part in public life.'

That great centre of Liberalism, Manchester, was the source whence the foregoing candid confession of Lord Beaconsfield's political and personal merits proceeded. The following, which though more brief is scarcely less laudatory, or less significant, is from a still more politically hostile source—from Birmingham:—'To what we Liberals call the loftier attributes of a great statesman, to do him justice, he never laid claim; indeed, if his works afford a true index to his inner thought, he held them consistently in something like contempt. But he had what Conservative leaders often lack—brilliancy, resource, vivacity, quickness of judgment both of men and of occasions; and to these he added a terrible power of invective, and of turning his most serious opponent into ridicule.'

Coming back to the metropolis, another oracle of the press of the same ultra-Radical school thus beseemingly moderated its rancour in the presence of death:—'The personal success of Lord Beaconsfield is of course indisputable. The early dreams of "Vivian Grey" were amply realised. The young lawyer's clerk lived to be not only a member of the proudest aristocracy in the world, but to be its trusted

chief, to wear the insignia of its most select order, and to represent his country in the councils of Europe. Though late achieved, there is something dazzling in the achievement, especially when we remember the successive steps by which it was won. We grudge no tribute of praise to such brilliant ability.'

We have preferred adducing independent testimonies such as these to what might be thought more partial and more fervid eulogies of the Press of his own party; and this not only on account of their disinterestedness and indisputableness, but because the ancient proverb of *Fas est ab hoste doceri* has here a two-fold applicability and significance, as both implying that it is fair to receive instruction from an enemy, and at the same time to apply such instruction as attesting and confirming what we ourselves are contending for. But probably continental opinion represented even more faithfully than the English Press the value placed upon his services, and the position he occupied in the world's history. We append a few of these taken at haphazard from a number of foreign papers:—

'The loss which England has sustained by the death of Lord Beaconsfield will be felt not only in Great Britain, but throughout the entire civilised world.'—*North German Gazette.*

'Lord Beaconsfield knew how to elicit the interest, charm the imagination, and command the respect of the world.'—*Tribune.*

'The daringness with which he conducted English policy from 1874 to 1880 called forth the astonishment and admiration of Europe. Since the days of Lord Palmerston England has not played such a leading and important part in the history of the world. At the Congress of Berlin Lord Beaconsfield and Prince Bismarck were the two most remarkable figures.'—*National Zeitung.*

'One of the most eminent men of the century, whose name is all-important, not in English history alone, but in the history of all Europe, has died with Lord Beaconsfield. The importance of the man is seen from the fact that, rising from comparatively modest beginnings, he twice led the Tories to victory, twice guided the helm of the State, and most effectively thwarted Russian policy at the Congress of Berlin. For many years the British Empire possessed no more powerful representative and no greater champion of its prestige than the Earl of Beaconsfield.'—*Neue Freie Presse* of Vienna.

'Queen Victoria never had a more faithful counsellor than Lord Beaconsfield, nor since the days of Pitt and Fox has England ever possessed a more brilliant statesman. Bereft of his genius, the Conservative party has lost a head which it will be difficult, if not impossible, to replace; and Austria-Hungary has lost one who at all times and in various ways proved her true and faithful friend.'—*Extra Blatt.*

'By the death of Lord Beaconsfield England has lost the cleverest and most highly-gifted of her statesmen, and one of her most eminent diplomatists and politicians.' —*Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung.*

'Both the great political parties in England will equally suffer by his death.'—*Presse.*

'The British Empire has lost its most eminent statesman, a man who in many important qualities surpassed even his great antagonist, the present English Premier.'—*Deutsche Zeitung.*

'Lord Beaconsfield was a great man and a great statesman.'—*Tageblatt.*

'In the person of Lord Beaconsfield the Nestor of the Conservative statesmen of England is laid in the grave. Europe mourns the departure of a politician endowed with such rare gifts of intellect, and such a sagacious insight into the great problems of the world, while on her own part Austria-Hungary laments the loss of a warm admirer and sincere friend.'—*Abend Post.*

All the Roman papers published, with mourning borders, long biographies of Lord Beaconsfield, recognising his transcendent abilities and the great services he rendered his country, and this is all the more noteworthy, inasmuch as the general impression had prevailed in Rome that his policy was not favourable to Italy.

The week that elapsed between the death and the burial of the great statesman was a period of continued excitement. Curzon Street was still daily, and all day long, the scene of melancholy interest. A general wish had been felt throughout the country, and in the highest quarters, that the executors of the noble Earl should consent to a public funeral, and that Dean Stanley's offer of a resting place in Westminster Abbey should be accepted. On Tuesday, Mr. Gladstone addressed a letter to Lord Rowton officially offering a public funeral. This letter was as follows:—

'HAWARDEN CASTLE, *April 19th*, 1881.

'Dear Lord Rowton,—It was with sad surprise, after the more favourable accounts of successive days down to yesterday morning, that I learned this day at an early hour of the decease of Lord Beaconsfield, which will be regarded with so much mournful interest throughout the country, and beyond its limits. In conformity with the message I have already sent, I desire at once to inform you and his executors that if it should be agreeable to their wishes I should be prepared to give the necessary directions for a public funeral. In tendering this honour on the part of the government I feel assured that I am acting in conformity with general expectation and desire.—I remain, dear Lord Rowton, faithfully yours, W. E. GLADSTONE.

'P.S.—Should the proposal be accepted, I beg you at once to convey the instructions to my private secretary, Mr. E. W. Hamilton, now in Downing Street.'

THE LATE VISCOUNTESS BEACONSFIELD.

By kind permission from "THE GRAPHIC."

In reply a telegram was despatched on Wednesday as follows:—

'*20th April*, 1881.

'From Sir Nathaniel de Rothschild and Sir Philip Rose
'to Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M.P., Hawarden.

'With deep and sincere appreciation of the generous motives which dictated your offer, we feel ourselves precluded, by the terms of Lord Beaconsfield's will, from accepting the public mark of honour which you so kindly proposed, and have written you fully.'

The letter referred to in the telegram is as follows:—

'1, GROSVENOR GARDENS, *April 20th*, 1881.

'Dear Mr. Gladstone,—Your letter to Lord Rowton of yesterday has been placed in the hands of myself and Sir Philip Rose, as the executors named in the will of Lord Beaconsfield, and we desire to express our deep sense of the generous motives which have induced you to propose to do honour to his memory by offering to give directions for a public funeral. But while fully appreciating this proposal on your part, and expressing our grateful acknowledgments of the terms in which the proposal is conveyed, we feel ourselves precluded from accepting it by the terms of Lord Beaconsfield's will, dated in 1878, and which, as far as regards the directions for his funeral are concerned, is an echo of a previous one made in 1873, which directs that he should be buried at Hughenden by the side of the late Viscountess Beaconsfield, and for which he had made careful provision in his life-time. We fully sympathise in the strong feeling that everywhere exists in favour of a public expression of regret for so great a loss to the country—a feeling which your kind letter anticipated; but we think you will agree with us, upon perusal of the extract from Lord Beaconsfield's will which I enclose, that we have no alternative but to carry out his wishes.—I remain, dear Mr. Gladstone, yours faithfully, N. M. DE ROTHSCHILD.

'The Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M.P.'

The following is the extract of the will alluded to by Sir N. M. de Rothschild, as forwarded to the Prime Minister:—

'*Extract from the will of the Earl of Beaconsfield, dated 16th September, 1878:*

'"I desire and direct that I may be buried in the same vault in the churchyard of Hughenden in which the remains of my late wife, Mary Ann Disraeli, created in her own right Viscountess Beaconsfield, were placed, and that my funeral may be conducted with the same simplicity as hers was."'

The inquiries as to the funeral were anxious and incessant, and for a day or two it appeared uncertain where would be his last resting-place—Westminster Abbey or Hughenden churchyard. The Queen desired that the memory of her faithful minister should be

honoured by burying him among such a host of our country's worthies as lie silently side by side in the Abbey,—

> 'There, where the end of earthly things
> Lay heroes, patriots, bards, and kings:
> Where stiff the hand, and still the tongue,
> Of those who fought, and spoke, and sung:
>
> There, where the fretted aisles prolong
> The distant notes of holy song,
> As if some angel spoke again,
> All peace on earth, goodwill to men.'

And on these accounts, if nothing else, meet burial place it would certainly have been for a hero and a patriot so notable and so memorable as Benjamin Disraeli. But her Majesty graciously yielded to the recorded wish of the deceased himself to be buried in the vault where he had interred the loved remains of his devoted wife, the Viscountess Beaconsfield, and where a place had been prepared for his own.

The day appointed for the funeral was the Tuesday following that of the decease. A Sunday thus intervening, the solemn subject of such universal interest and excitement all throughout the kingdom, but more especially in the metropolis, and at Hughenden, was, as it became so consistent with all Christian and all natural propriety to do, reverentially made more or less mention and improvement of, pretty generally in the pulpits of the Established Church, and partially in those of the more moderate dissenting communities. In London, at Westminster Abbey, at St. Paul's Cathedral, and at most, if not all the principal churches, such was especially the case, and to more than usually crowded congregations. Hymns and anthems, too, appropriate to such an occasion, were in most cases used.

But the fane of deepest and most affecting interest on that Sunday was the modest, though graceful village church of Hughenden, within sight, and almost within hearing of which, is the manor-house where the body then lay, awaiting its burial. The little church is peculiarly picturesque, as well as appropriately graceful; and it had owed much, from time to time, to both Lord and Lady Beaconsfield for its

being so. It had evidently been made the scene of much pious and affectionate care and pains to befit it for the festive celebration of Easter-tide. 'Female taste,' said one of the published accounts of the occasion, 'was obviously concerned in the æsthetic employment of the Easter week decorations, varying from the choicest hot-house blooms to wild flowers and mosses of neighbouring slopes and plantations. The font was filled with white and green hyacinths, noon daisies, Gueldre roses, and fern leaves. Pulpit and lectern were adorned with primroses, yellow daffodils, and interwoven mosses. The chancel railing was decked in greater variety of colour, artistically blended, the top forming a bed of green, in which azaleas, tulips, violets, primroses, and hyacinths were grouped with charming effect, while handsome potted plants flanked the altar on either side. On the reredos were crosses and other emblems formed with white and pink geraniums and azalea blossoms, while beneath the window suitable texts were embroidered in white on a crimson ground. For the morning service some of these were removed, but enough remained to produce an effect of the most agreeable kind. The little edifice will probably not contain more than three hundred people, and the certainty that the vicar would refer at some length to the loss of his distinguished parishioner and personal friend, the Lord of the Manor of Hughenden, brought many besides the usual worshippers from Wycombe and the country round, so that there was not a vacant seat. Just before the service commenced, at half-past ten, Lord Rowton, Sir N. M. De Rothschild, and Sir P. Rose (the executors), came from the house of mourning and took their places in the pew of the late Earl, which was within the chancel screen and behind the choir on the north side. The service was a full choral one.' The vicar (the Rev. H. Blagden) preached, taking for his text the thirty-sixth verse of the fifteenth chapter of St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians (which forms part of the Burial Service)—'That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die;' and, after forcibly remarking on the great truth here proclaimed by the holy Apostle, he thus proceeded:—

'I want to impress upon you that the higher your end is, the nobler and better is the life which you must inevitably lead. Now I say this because in the life of the great man whose loss we mourn to-day, ever since I have known him, this has always seemed to be one of his conspicuous works. It is a work which I have known him to impress again and again upon my own children. You know that the life of him whom we mourn to-day stands absolutely alone in the annals of our time. It is the life of a man who, starting with everything, humanly speaking, against him, has steadily risen, and nobly risen, to fill the post of the highest honour in this land. But I rather want to speak of him to-day in a few simple words as he was here in Hughenden, as we knew him and as we watched him. No doubt there are many amongst those whom I am addressing who have known the genial kindness and simplicity with which he was always ready to enter into everything that had to do with the parish. Have we not here watched him coming down, even when at the height of his prosperity and power—coming down here, simply and humbly, Sunday after Sunday, as often as his health permitted, to take his place amongst us, and worship God—joining in our service. Again, do we not remember, many of us, how we, in large numbers, knelt side by side with him only on Christmas-day last at yon altar, where he received from my hand the blessed body and blood of Christ. Knowing him as we did here in Hughenden, no man can say that he was either an irreverent or an irreligious man without most cruelly and most foully maligning his memory. I cannot, I do not pretend to say that I enjoyed his confidence, or anything like great intimacy with him. I only know this from the necessary intercourse I have had with him as vicar of the parish for twelve years; and I never in my life heard him breathe a syllable which could be construed into irreverence or want of due regard for the Church, whose constitution he so well understood, and whose place and importance in the nation none valued more highly than he did. Let us not then judge according to outward appearances, but let us "judge by a righteous judgment." Looking at the man's life—how far would you go before you met with a man whose temper was so completely under control as was his. Look at his marvellous patience, not only in his political life, but here amongst ourselves, and still more, perhaps, it shone out in the beautiful and touching scene of his last illness, when though racked with pain he could control himself to give a gentle smile and say some kind words to those he loved around him. It is surely by these things that we must and ought to judge our dear brother whom God has taken to Himself, because much was given to him, much responsibility was laid upon him, and he has gone to answer for all that at the bar of an all-just and at the same time an all-knowing and loving God. Yet there is one lesson which, I think, his life should impress upon our minds to-day, and which we must all take to our hearts. The principle of his life, which I think you may well adopt, is setting before yourselves some great and noble aim, which you mean steadily to work for, and which you mean patiently to wait for.'

It would crowd our pages too much to give even the briefest extracts from any fair selection of other sermons on this solemn and

interesting Sunday, all of which appear to have contained similar respectful allusions to the distinguished public man whose body the grave was being prepared to receive. But there was one sermon, preached at a far distant nook of the ancient kingdom of Scotland—at the little rural chapel of St. Ternan's, at Banchory—an extract from which has come into our hands that we cannot withhold, showing as it does so strikingly how widespread as well as how correct, even in the northernmost limits of the United Kingdom, was the appreciation of Lord Beaconsfield's eventful life and personal character. It is this:—'Yet in spite of divisions concerning his policy, Lord Beaconsfield has always been personally a popular favourite. The public instinct recognised in him a man of extraordinary ability, of unique and fascinating personality. Thus beneath the fiercest anger of recent days, there ran always an undercurrent of admiration, if not also of affectionate sympathy. But few public men have from the outset of their career had to pass through a fiercer fire of calumny, of scorn, of frenzied assault, and this perhaps, more than anything else, has brought out into unequalled prominence those kindred characteristics of the man—his indomitable resolution, his indefatigable energy, his unruffled patience. No man of his vocation ever struggled against such overwhelming odds; none ever attained to so lofty a triumph; none ever carried to the grave so few disfiguring scars. That he truly loved the country of his family's adoption, none at present has ventured to deny; that he loved that country wisely, I think will be denied by few, and fewer as inevitable time rolls on. To see England not merely rich and prosperous in merchandise and homely comforts, but also mighty in the councils of the nations, feared and honoured by all the world—this was his day-dream; his waking ideal, ever present to his mind with power. He has been accused, as Moses was of old, as all great leaders have ever been, of personal ambition. Upon this question we need not wait for posterity to pronounce. Such an ambition has ever been regarded as noble and unselfish, being mingled only with as much individuality as forms the essential medium of genius. He has been accused of

gaudiness of taste and insolidity of mind. To the latter charge let his whole patiently consistent course reply; to the former, his moderation in the pursuit and acceptance of honours, the touching modesty of his last request,'—the request, his own request, it is to be supposed, that he might be buried, not in the venerable Abbey, to be proudly associated with the great men of this ancient and famous realm, whose mortal remains have in such countless instances for so many centuries been accumulating within that consecrated pile of grand antiquity, but in his own humbler and quieter vault, in his own village churchyard, where, not the royal, the noble, and the great, but where only, or mainly,

'The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.'

The funeral at Hughenden was such a display of public respect and personal esteem, as it but rarely falls to the lot of any subject of a great realm to be the honoured object of. The body was removed from Curzon Street to Hughenden Manor during the night, where it lay in state on the day preceding and the morning of the burial, the attendance at the solemn rites of which, of all classes, from royal princes and noble peers, down to the humblest of their fellow-subjects, was numerous beyond all calculation, and immensely exceeding the means of accommodation which it had been possible to provide, not in the church and at the vault only, but in the grounds and spaces adjacent. Some idea of this may be formed from the fact, as correctly reported by the Great Western Railway officials, that upwards of 1,500 passengers left the station at Paddington for High Wycombe during the morning of the funeral; and if to this number be added thousands from all the country round about, some coming by the railway lines, but many in their own carriages, and still more on horseback, or on foot, we have, in round numbers, such a gathering as but few public occasions of the kind in the provinces has ever drawn together.

Very remarkable tokens of respect for his lordship's memory were exhibited in great profusion and varied significance in the floral wreaths and other funereal tributes, many of them elaborately and

beautifully constructed, and bearing appropriate mottoes, expressive of affection and appreciation. One from the Queen herself was brought from Windsor Castle by members of the royal household, on behalf of her Majesty; and the Prince of Wales brought another as the presentation of the Princess of Wales: there were several others from members of the royal family, an l from personal friends among the nobility. Among the more prominent inscriptions may be noticed the following, as indicating both a political and personal interest:—'To the memory of England's staunchest friend;' 'To the memory of one loved with a nation's devotion and personal affection;' 'To the memory of one to whom a nation's recollection will be that of a more conscious loyalty to the wisdom of his teaching;' 'A tribute of the deepest sorrow, and the most sincere and devoted admiration,'—a magnificent wreath, about three feet in diameter, from the Junior Carlton Club, composed of white roses, lilac; and azaleas, having in the centre the letter B, surmounted by a coronet worked in double violets, with a scroll bearing the words, 'In respectful memory.' Another remarkable one was the floral device of a magnificent coronet, two feet in height, made up of stephanotis, studded with pansies, and bearing the motto,—'A token of remembrance of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, K.G., from one who, though alien in politics, yet not in race, was a fervent admirer of him "who rose o'er life's tide as lilies o'er the stream, and earned a sovereign's gratitude and a nation's love."' A novel tribute from the Ramsgate Constitutional Association, was in the form of a floral arch, worked in camellias, hyacinths, lilies, roses, and violets; and another tasteful floral wreath was sent by the Margate Conservative Association. And still another that deserves notice—a beautiful floral wreath from the South Lancashire Conservative Association, having the letter B in the centre, worked in red rose-buds. There were several simple but beautiful floral wreaths, mostly bearing the words, 'In affectionate remembrance,' sent in tin boxes by children of the nobility. The above-mentioned are selected as specimens of a collection which filled a large van, and many of which had to be piled up around the

coffin. An interesting tribute (placed by the donor's own hand) consisted of a sprig of olive from Mount Olivet, and one of cypress from Jerusalem, which had been brought from the Holy Land by an admiring friend of the deceased Earl, Mr. Frederick Hyndman, of the Inner Temple. The last wreath that was placed on the coffin after it was in the vault was the final tribute of affection and devotion from his lordship's faithful attendant, Mr. Baum, consisting of an ingenious and tasteful arrangement of 'everlasting' flowers.

The following was the order of procession from the Hughenden manor-house to the church:—

Mr. Frederick Baum, his Lordship's Confidential Valet, carrying the Insignia of the Order of the Garter.

Borne by eight | THE BODY. | labourers on the estate.

CHIEF MOURNERS.

Mr. Disraeli. Mr. Coningsby Disraeli. Lord Rowton.
Viscount Barrington. Sir N. M. de Rothschild, Bart., M.P. Sir Philip Rose, Bart.
H.R.H. the Prince of Wales. H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught.
H.R.H. Prince Leopold.
General Sir Henry Ponsonby, Colonel the Hon. W. J. Colville,
representing H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh.
General Viscount Bridport, Captain Eliot,
representing the Prince and Princess Christian.
Colonel Tyrwhitt, C.B., representing H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge.
The Ambassadors and Ministers of Foreign Powers, two and two.
The friends of the deceased nobleman who were his colleagues in the governments of 1868 and 1874.
The other friends of the deceased nobleman holding cards of admission to Hughenden Manor.
Mr. Algernon Turnor, Mr. James F. Daly, Mr. W. H. Van Baerle,
late private secretaries to his Lordship.
Mr. P. Frederick Rose, Solicitor. Mr. Arthur Vernon, land agent.
The household servants.
The tenants.

Whilst the last preparations for the burial were being made at the manor, shortly after noon the Bucks Volunteers arrived at the station, and marched to the church-yard under the command of Major

Springhall Thompson; and about the same time the muffled bells of Wycombe Church chimed plaintively, a white ensign floating half-staff high on the church tower. Not long before, there was in this same church tower an affecting coincidence for the solemn occasion. High Wycombe, like many country towns, has a carillon, which plays at stated hours; and the sacred melody it had now, in due course, to play at noon-tide, was that of Mendelssohn's beautiful and comforting anthem, 'O, Rest in the Lord,' which would not fail to be listened to by many, on their way to the funeral, one may be sure, with deep emotion.

The friends of the deceased, holding tickets, who sorrowingly followed the funeral procession, were numerous, and included many distinguished persons, some of whom, however, were unable to gain access to the church, which those in the procession and others necessarily in attendance had so soon filled.

There thus followed to the grave of the great statesman, to pay their last tribute of respect, and to see him 'buried in peace,' and with honour, an assemblage thoroughly representative of the greatness and glory of the country in its public life, and of the various more respectable classes of society in its private character. As given in the procession, as above, there was the much revered royalty of the realm; there were the ambassadors and ministers of foreign powers; and both Houses of Parliament were well represented: the Lords by the Dukes of Richmond, Northumberland, Marlborough, Wellington, Beaufort, Somerset, Buccleuch, Buckingham and Chandos, Portland; the Marquises of Abergavenny, Exeter, and Hamilton; the Earls Beauchamp, Derby, Cairns, Cadogan, Redesdale, Stanhope, Bradford, Lytton, Lathom, Abingdon, Rosebery, Dufferin, Rosslyn; Lords Cottesloe, Alrington, Leamington, Colville, Carington. The House of Commons by Sir Stafford Northcote, Lord Hartington, Sir William Harcourt, Mr. Spencer Walpole, Mr. W. H. Smith, Mr. Bourke, Col. Taylor, Sir W. Hart Dyke, Lord G. Hamilton, the Hon. E. Stanhope, Mr. E. Winn, Viscount Newport, Lord John Manners, Mr. Walter, Mr. Harvey, Sir R. Wallace, Sir H. Peek,

Sir G. Elliot, Sir R. Harvey, Lord Lindsay, Lord H. Lennox, Mr. C. Villiers, Mr. H. Chaplin, Colonel Loyd-Lindsay, Mr. McCullagh-Torrens, etc.; while among other public men of note, not then in parliament, were Mr. Bernal-Osborne, Col. Talbot, Sir R. Peel, Lord Ronald Gower, Sir H. Edwards, Hon. J. F. Fremantle (High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire), Sir W. Jenner, Sir Albert Woods, Mr. Drake, Dr. Quain, Dr. Kidd, Dr. Bruce, etc., etc.

The church in its ordinary state has much to excite reverential admiration in every pious mind. The altar presents a rich display of splendid embroidery—principally from the needle of Mrs. Blagden, the much respected wife of the Vicar, a most devoted churchwoman; the super-frontal, which is of coloured silk velvet, appropriate to the Church's sacred seasons, being adorned with beautiful figure-work in fruits and flowers, with a crown of thorns and a cross; and over the altar is laid a lace covering, patterned in ears of wheat, as emblematic of the staple interest of the neighbourhood—the lace being the work, and the gift, of parishioners. The only extra decorations for the impressive funereal rite to be performed were collections of fresh flowers, all pure white, which were placed upon the altar.

The service in its solemn simplicity secured the rapt attention of the densely crowded congregation within, and even of that supplemental portion of it without the walls of the holy place, open windows and doors enabling many to hear it more or less distinctly. The coffin was then removed to the vault outside, where all was ready for its reception, and that most affecting part of the Church's office for the burial of the dead which is appointed for the grave-side was reverently said by the Vicar, not without emotion on his part, and amidst many floods of tears, and many deep-drawn sighs, among those who stood around. It was, indeed, altogether a solemnly affecting scene—keenly touching and deeply impressive in all its mournful phases; and none seemed to feel it such more sensibly, or more conspicuously, than the three royal princes, standing side by side, representing their august mother and the sovereign of an empire 'on which the sun never sets,' and by whom the deceased was not

only respected, but honoured, for his wise counsels and his faithful services as her Majesty's devoted 'minister of the crown.'

But all classes of the country, as we have already shown—from royalty downwards—were represented on that affecting and unique occasion. Whig and Tory singularly yet happily contrived—or were constrained—to forget, on an occasion so conducive to reconciliation, and so characteristic of brotherhood, their divisions and their differences, and to appear eager, if not to cement a recovered political friendship, at least to have a political truce over Benjamin Disraeli's grave. Yes: political foes grasped hands in restored amity and goodwill—some that we witnessed after unhappy temporary estrangements, as in the case of the Marquis of Salisbury and the Earl of Derby, whom their lamented chief, when living and presiding over them, had tried in vain, it was understood, to reconcile politically, after that unfortunate cabinet rupture which resulted in severing the noble Earl from his party, and leading him so far and so deplorably astray, as to cause him to ally himself with those who seek to attack British institutions, which he had devoted all his public life before to defending and upholding.

There was an illustration, on this memorable though melancholy occasion, of a very different feeling on the part of one to whom Lord Derby would seem so suddenly, if not so unwisely, to have transferred the allegiance, and apparently the admiration, which hitherto he had shown towards the man at whose grave he was now a mourner. Lord Derby might perhaps be said, under all the circumstances, to be conspicuous by his *presence;* but certainly Mr. Gladstone was conspicuous by his *absence.* The two great statesmen and party leaders had for some years, it is true, been great rivals; though there was a time when they espoused the same constitutional cause, and belonged to the same Conservative party, to which the one had proved unfaithful, while the other had remained true. But at the grave all such rivalries and animosities, one would have thought, might have been buried with the dead object of them. So, indeed, thought many at the time—many even of Mr. Gladstone's

own familiar friends, yea, even of his closest colleagues in office. He was expected, and it was understood he had consented, to perform an act of some magnanimity. He had on many previous occasions been magnanimous in public life; and in private life magnanimity is well known to be one of his many eminent virtues. During Lord Beaconsfield's fatal illness he had called in Curzon Street to make inquiry as to his condition. It was stated by the newspapers, in their accounts of the funeral, that at the Paddington railway station, 'down to the last moment the presence of Mr. Gladstone was eagerly looked forward to, and the train was detained several minutes in expectation of his arrival. At twenty-five minutes past one o'clock, however, an intimation was received by the station-master from the Marquis of Hartington, stating that it was not the intention of the Premier to be present; and great was the disappointment felt and expressed by the public who waited to witness a last graceful tribute of respect from the leading statesman of the day to the memory of his life-long political rival.'

Nor was it here at home, that the denial of what would have been so liberal-minded and so graceful an act on the part of that leading living statesman was felt so disappointing, and thought so regrettable. The feeling of surprise, of disappointment, and sorrow, would seem to have been deeply felt and strongly expressed on the Continent, as well as in England. We read in the Paris *Temps*, for instance, how much the French people were impressed by such an omission—by the fact 'that from the obsequies of a great Englishman, at which the future King of England, and, to quote its own words, '*Tout ce que l'Angleterre a de plus illustre, de plus titré, de plus puissans*,' attended to pay a last tribute of respect to his memory, one leading figure should have been absent. No one could have seen without emotion Mr. Gladstone leaning over the grave in which Lord Beaconsfield was laid to rest,' significantly adding:—'This is the second time in two days that Mr. Gladstone, through an accident no doubt, has missed the opportunity of paying a public tribute of regret to a rival whom he must have esteemed more than anyone,

since he had often been defeated by him,'—alluding to his absence when the death of Lord Beaconsfield was so feelingly alluded to in the House of Commons. But in justice we must say the right hon. gentleman made some amends for these much-talked-of omissions by the eloquent speech he delivered in proposing a public monument to Lord Beaconsfield, which we shall have hereafter to notice.

After the funeral at Hughenden Church, the will of Lord Beaconsfield was read by Mr. P. F. Rose, solicitor, in the saloon at Hughenden Manor, in the presence of the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Connaught, Prince Leopold, and the other distinguished mourners. In this will, which is dated December 16th, 1878, the late Earl bequeaths all his personal estate, including the copyright of his works, to his executors, upon trust that they shall convert it into money, and after the payment of his debts and funeral expenses, apply the residue in the manner subsequently directed. The Manor of Hughenden, with the mansion house, grounds, and appurtenances, the advowson of the church, and all his landed property in the county of Bucks, are bequeathed to Coningsby Ralph Disraeli, son of Mr. Ralph Disraeli, after Coningsby's decease to his sons, with remainder to the other sons of Mr. R. Disraeli, who may be hereafter born, and failing them, successively to the three daughters of his brother Ralph and their children. Whoever becomes possessed of Hughenden under this will shall take the name of Disraeli only. The trees on the estate are not to be cut down. The mansion and estate may be let during the minority of the heir, which extends to the age of 26 years, and the rents applied for the permanent improvement of the property. If they grant leases, the trustees are to reserve 'the best yearly rent that can reasonably be gotten without taking any premium.' The trustees may sell any portion of the estate except Hughenden Manor and its grounds, and with the proceeds purchase other freehold or copyhold hereditaments, or discharge any mortgage. A discretion is given them to make a selection from the contents of Hughenden House of articles to be held as heirlooms.

The bequest of the papers of the late Earl is in the following terms:—

'I give and bequeath to my friend and private secretary, Montagu Corry, Esq., all the letters, papers, and documents, whether of a private or of a public character, and whether in print or in manuscript; and also all the manuscript of any writings published or composed by me of which I shall die possessed; and also all the manuscripts and papers of my late father, Isaac Disraeli, Esq., upon the trusts hereinafter declared concerning the same.'

And to Lord Rowton is also given full discretion as to dealing with these papers in these words:—

'I give to the said Montagu Corry full discretion with regard to the publication of all or any of such documents, leaving to him to decide as to the time and mode of publication; and as many of the said documents are connected with my official and public life, and contain matters bearing on the character and conduct of contemporary statesmen and on affairs which it may be of importance to the public interests should not be prematurely or indiscreetly disclosed, I give the above discretion to the said Montagu Corry in the full assurance that he will scrupulously respect every confidence reposed in me, and will cause or allow nothing to be published calculated to do injury to the public service or to inflict needless pain on the living or on the families of the dead.'

Directions were also given that the correspondence with the Queen should not be published except by special permission.

The loyal devotion which the noble Earl always exhibited in the service of the Queen was fully and graciously appreciated by her Majesty. No one sent more frequently or more anxiously to inquire after him, day by day, during his distressing illness in Curzon Street. None took more personal pains to see that everything was done that medical skill and other human aid could do, to alleviate his sufferings, or, if possible, to avert their fatal issue. Nor, when all was over, and 'his spirit had returned to God who gave it,' was there, perhaps, any testimony of respect, or esteem, or affection, or honour—of all the many such testimonies that were so prominently and so gratefully bestowed—that gave a more decided indication of his sovereign's sympathy and concern, than her Majesty's anxious and affectionate eagerness, after his lamented departure, to visit the last resting-place of Lord Beaconsfield at Hughenden: a sympathy and a concern

that became heightened and expanded by several interesting incidents attending so affecting a mark of considerate regard. Every precaution was taken to ensure as much privacy as possible to the royal visit, and to divest it of all appearance of mere formality or ostentation. Lord Rowton was summoned to Windsor purposely to arrange for securing that object. The Queen, who was accompanied by the Princess Beatrice and a small suite, wished to follow the same route as that travelled by Lord Beaconsfield on his last return from Windsor to Hughenden, not many weeks before; and the arrangements were made for it accordingly—one of the grooms from Hughenden preceding the royal carriage to direct the way. On reaching the manor-house,[1] her Majesty was received with all due respect and quiet ceremony by Lord Rowton and Sir Philip Rose, the executors, who conducted the royal party to the church, where they were met by the Vicar and Mrs. Blagden. At the church her Majesty expressed much admiration of the work of restoration that had been so judiciously carried on, and looked with mournful interest at the fast-fading wreaths which were in the chancel-seat his lordship was accustomed to occupy. Various objects of sacred interest pointed out having been attentively examined, the royal visitors were next conducted with marked solemnity to the vault, at the entrance to which her Majesty paused for a minute, gazing with evident emotion at the sight of the coffin within, on which, as she approached it, she placed amid the heap of flowers already there a white wreath and floral cross, brought from Windsor, as another affectionate offering to the memory of him, near the encasement of whose mortal remains she now stood sorrowing. After a few minutes of silent yet evidently mournful gazing on the coffin and its funereal surroundings, her Majesty and the Princess tearfully took leave of the tomb, and retracing their steps, under the guidance of the executors, proceeded up the steep and winding path leading to the manor-house. On entering the private grounds, a shrill and somewhat startling salute from Lord Beaconsfield's favourite peacocks heralded the approach of their departed master's most gracious and

[1] *Vide* the *Standard*, and reports in other newspapers.

gratefully sympathising sovereign. On arriving at the glass-cased piazza of the mansion, the interior of which is adorned with statuary, foliage, and flowering plants, the royal visitors passed into the house, engaged as they slowly pursued their way in close though subdued conversation with Lord Rowton. They then entered the late lord's elegant and favourite study, and other principal apartments; and after a stay of nearly an hour inspecting the variety of interesting and valuable objects contained therein, they took their departure for Windsor Castle. Her Majesty having expressed a wish that the vault should now be carefully and finally closed, Lord Rowton and Sir Philip Rose, before leaving Hughenden, returned to it to assure themselves that the masonry work necessary for the purpose was being promptly completed.

Among other memorials bestowed by the Queen on the memory of her eminent minister, is one by Mr. R. C. Belt, now erected in Hughenden Church, immediately above the seat usually occupied by Lord Beaconsfield—a place selected by the Queen herself. The monument is a touching and will be a durable testimonial to that friendship and personal regard which her Majesty so graciously showed towards his lordship, more especially during the last few years of his valuable life. The centre of the memorial is occupied by a profile portrait, in statuary marble, of the noble Earl, in low relief, placed within a quatrefoil cartouch, flanked by buttresses, and crowned by a carved and crested canopy enclosing an heraldic hatchment of his lordship's arms and supporters. Below this is a tablet bearing the following inscription from the Queen's own pen:—

TO
THE DEAR AND HONOURED MEMORY
OF BENJAMIN EARL OF BEACONSFIELD,
THIS MEMORIAL IS PLACED BY
HIS GRATEFUL AND AFFECTIONATE
SOVEREIGN AND FRIEND,
VICTORIA R. I.

'Kings love him that
speaketh right.'
Proverbs xvi. 13.

The sentence from Proverbs which the Queen has there inscribed is not less emphatically expressive of her Majesty's assurance of her minister's wisdom than of his integrity; and it verifies also another divine proverb, 'The king's favour is toward a wise servant.'

About a fortnight after the funeral the subject of a national monument to the late Earl in Westminster Abbey was brought before the Houses of Parliament, which were crowded to excess, so great was the interest felt in the occasion. In the House of Lords Earl Granville proposed an address to her Majesty, praying that directions for a monument might be given, and the motion being seconded by Lord Salisbury and supported by the Earl of Malmesbury, was carried unanimously. In the House of Commons a similar resolution, recognizing Lord Beaconsfield's 'rare and splendid gifts,' and his 'devoted labours in Parliament and in the great offices of state,' was proposed by Mr. Gladstone, whose speech was eagerly and anxiously awaited. In his observations the right hon. gentleman said the career of Lord Beaconsfield was in many respects the most remarkable one in Parliamentary history. He knew but one that could be fairly compared to it in regard to the emotion of surprise, and when viewed as a whole, emotion of wonder it excited, and that was the career, and especially the earlier career, of Mr. Pitt. He then continued:—

'There were certain great qualities of the deceased statesman on which I think it right to touch. His extraordinary intellectual powers are as well understood by others as by me, and they are not proper subjects for our present commendation. But there were other great qualities—qualities not merely intellectual in the sense of being dissociated from conduct, but qualities immediately connected with conduct, with regard to which I should say, were I a younger man, that I should like to stamp the recollection of them on myself for my own future guidance, and with regard to which I will confidently say to those who are younger than myself that I would strongly recommend them for notice and imitation. (Cheers.) They were qualities not only written in a marked manner on his career, but possessed by him in a degree undoubtedly extraordinary. I speak, for example, of such as these—his strength of will; his long-sighted persistency of purpose, reaching from the first entrance on the avenue of life to its very close; his remarkable powers of self-government; and last, but not least of all, his great Parliamentary courage, a quality in which I, who have been associated in the course of my life with some scores of Ministers, have never known but two whom I could pronounce to be his equal.

Mr. Gladstone's speech was followed by a very appropriate and touching tribute from Sir Stafford Northcote, and the House passed the motion, 380 voting for it, and only 54 against it.

Such, then, was Lord Beaconsfield: such was his life, such his character; such was the eminence he so successfully attained, such were the honours he so worthily earned. The architect of his own fortune, he reared for himself a monument of greatness and glory: not a material fabric, not one made with hands, and not therefore a perishable structure; but one the elements of which belong to mind, not to matter, and the crowning capital of which, as we have seen, has been furnished by the sovereign, whose trusted minister, whose sagacious counsellor, and whose devoted friend, he had the great honour, and supreme merit, of raising himself to be from a position of comparative obscurity. 'The king's name is a tower of strength;' and his sovereign's gracious name has given a solidity to the monument of his fame of which he himself, and he alone was the architect, that will doubtless secure its preservation to a prolonged posterity. Surely it were—and we have felt it to be—a high and proud honour to produce an *Appreciative* Life of such a man. It has in deed and in truth been a labour of love to us to prepare it; though we cannot but feel it is much too imperfect to be in any wise worthy of him.

The examples we have had occasion to give, in our work, of his political sagacity, his deep knowledge of human nature, and his studied acquaintance with civil society in all its phases; his clear comprehension and appreciation of the genius of the English people, the soundness of his constitutional principles,—and all these great qualities appropriated and exerted with a sincerity and constancy of purpose, as well as with that great ability, in which mainly lay the secret of his success,—all this, we say, must be so illustrative, as well as so appreciative, as to render it quite unnecessary to argue further for his claim to be regarded as a master spirit of his age, and one whose wisdom and whose policy will often be invoked by

future British statesmen, and the memory of whose exalted character and distinguished career will long be proudly cherished by a loyal British people throughout the British Empire.

But if it were needful, after all, to conclude with a formal and an emphatic eulogy, there is one to our hands in the very genial glowing words, which he, with so much reason and so much affection, wrote of his noble friend, Lord George Bentinck, and which may now, with equal justice and equal propriety, be applied to himself; that—'free from prejudice, his large mind sympathised with all classes of the realm. His courage and constancy were never surpassed by man. He valued life only as a means of fulfilling duty; and truly it may be said of him that he feared nothing but God.' This, though written by himself, and of another, is a true though brief comment on his own character. There are other criticisms of character from his own pen which are—though unwittingly, of course, on his part—strikingly applicable to himself. As, for instance, in his 'Endymion,' his own character is distinctly and faithfully reflected, thus:—'He was one who obtained influence over all with whom he came personally in contact; and as his position placed him in contact with various classes, his influence was great. He was neither pretentious nor servile, but simple, and with becoming respect for others and for himself.'

No doubt there will be various monuments yet erected to commemorate the estimable services to his country of so great a man. A national monument is already in hand. But the best and truest monument of all must ever be himself: as remembered and recognized, for ages yet to come, in his undying fame as a British Statesman, and his bright example as a British Patriot.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

IN MEMORIAM

'I'll sweeten thy sad grave! Thou shalt not lack
The flower that's like thy face, pale PRIMROSE.'—*Shakespeare.*

IN MEMORY! Yes: to this has our memoir come at last; as to this all memoirs must sooner or later come. It is now to the memory of our hero we have a final tribute to pay, and not one chapter more of the career that made him such is it necessary to prepare. Great statesmen are heroes, as well as great soldiers: so, indeed, it is set down and to be held, that one of the highest class, and the greatest fame, in any respect, is ever to be considered and pronounced a hero. And there is such a thing—Lord Beaconsfield himself has declared it—as 'the legacy of such heroes:' which is 'the memory of a great name, and the inheritance of a great example.'[1] Such, then, is the memory that is now to be had in remembrance, and that had its first anniversary in pursuance of that object on the 19th of April, 1882.

The occasion was not forgotten or neglected in the metropolis, although it was too soon for the public monument that is in preparation there, as voted by parliament, to be ready for dedication. But thousands of Lord Beaconsfield's more grateful admirers marked their deep sense of the solemnity of the anniversary and their affectionate interest in its observance, by wearing in their breasts that floral token of reverence and regard he had himself so emblematically adopted—the primrose. The very streets, in Westminster more particularly, were bright with that sweet and graceful flower in all directions; and in the fashionable drives and rides of

[1] Speech in the House of Commons on the Address, Feb. 1, 1849.

the parks it was memorably and significantly conspicuous. A not less sensibly and thus gracefully sentimental writer in the United States—a fair cousin and congenial spirit of our own flower-loving fair—discoursing florally of emblems and symbols, and their pleasing adaption to human character, and intelligent exposition of intellectual feeling, thus expressively illustrates their mystic significancy:—'Here are *lilies:* from the tall, graceful, and gorgeous—lustrous beyond the coronals of the monarch of Israel, and vieing with the tints of the rainbow—to the little white dweller of the valley, dearly loved by all for its pure and balmy beauty. Here, too, are *violets*—blue, purple, golden, and white—each with its symbolic lesson of love, sobriety, cheerfulness, domestic happiness, or purity.'[1] This description, in its varied typical expressions, will show how highly and how aptly an interesting indication it was of sympathy, as well as sentient exercise of the memory, which honoured and reverenced its object,—commemorating characteristically and suitably so melancholy an anniversary day, and one the memorials of which it can with truth be said—

'From no blind zeal or fond tradition rose.'

But, very naturally and most appropriately, the principal and, as it could not fail to be, the most solemn and affecting scene was at Hughenden, and at its church, which is so full of monumental offerings, and other respectful tributes to his memory. This village sanctuary owed so much to Lord Beaconsfield's religious liberality and generous munificence for what it has been made, by its substantial and tasteful restoration, its sacred and suitable furnishing and adorning, and for the warm personal interest he showed in it as his parish church, that it must henceforth, and not improbably for ever, have his name and fame closely identified with its history and its interest. The fact, too, of its having been the place of worship he with exemplary punctuality and fidelity so habitually, and therefore so dutifully, frequented when enjoying his *otium cum dignitate* at Hughenden Manor, furnishes another reason for its being

[1] 'Lilies and Violets: or, Thoughts in Prose and Verse.' By Rosalie Bell.

regarded as having become closely connected with and consecrated to his memory.

It was there, in that now so interesting and beauteous rural fane —standing, too, as it does, at the very gates of his manorial domain— that the solemn ceremonies of the anniversary began, in the presence of a dense and deeply-affected throng of all classes of the people, who had come from far and near to participate in their performance. The first procedure, and one that excited the greatest and most respectful interest, was the dedication of the monument erected to Lord Beaconsfield by Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen. The next solemn ceremonial was the presentation at the tomb of funeral wreaths and other appropriate votive offerings, which were exceedingly numerous and had come from all parts of the world— one, a large and elaborate floral construction, having been sent all the way from Hong Kong, in China. But the most interesting, and among the most beautiful of all, were two sent from Windsor by the Queen and the Princess Beatrice: further strikingly testifying to the high and grateful esteem and affection which both those august and amiable royal personages bear to the honoured memory of Lord Beaconsfield. All the wreaths were reverentially deposited in the tomb, though so numerous were they that it was with difficulty they could all be placed in any due order.

The dedication solemnities were followed by a Commemoration Service in the church, consisting of the usual Evensong, with appropriate hymns, together with a sermon by the Rev. Canon Gregory, of St. Paul's Cathedral, who had been among Lord Beaconsfield's oldest and most attached clerical friends.

Hughenden Church is thus appropriately fitted as a shrine at which, doubtless for ages to come, the memory of Lord Beaconsfield will continue, as it so well deserves, to be honoured and revered.

But, after and above all, as we have had occasion to say in a former chapter, the best and most enduring monument will be that which he has himself created by his memorable public services, together with the powerful influence of his personal example, the

sterling integrity of his statesmanship, and the genuine quality of his patriotism. No 'storied urn or animated bust,' as the poet so gracefully reminds us, can ever 'back to its mansion call the fleeting breath: nor honour's voice provoke the silent dust, or flattery soothe the dull cold ear of death.' Still, we may be assured, that 'though dead, he yet speaketh.' May we not, indeed, repeat with reverence the sacred paraphrase, if only because of the almost literal significancy of its application—that though 'there is neither speech nor language,' his voice is heard among them, and that its sound 'is gone out through all the earth, and his words unto the end of the world.' And what remarkable illustration has not this idea received in much of actual incident that we have had to refer to in these pages—as, for instance, the presentation of the precious golden casket from San Francisco, in California, and the transmission of the beautiful floral wreath from Hong Kong, in China. Yes: and as his voice of 'wit and wisdom' will still be heard, and will still prevail, and the ring of his political sagacity, and his patriotic policy, still be recognized and regarded for ages yet to come, so will thus his memory be preserved, and become a perpetual monument. And it is in this we would so hopefully trust—nay, on this would so confidently rely—when 'the times of refreshing shall come,' if only the great party to which he has bequeathed it all remains true to its traditions, and faithful to its principles; cheered, too, and cherished by the thought, so happy and so consolatory—

> 'That hope shall brighten days to come,
> While memory gilds the past!'

INDEX TO VOL. I.

ABERDEEN, Lord, 367.
Agriculture and Politics, 126.
'Alroy,' 9, 70, 78.
Althorpe, Lord, 89.
Ancestry of Lord Beaconsfield, 22.
Andrews, James Pettit, 29.
Anti-Corn Law Agitation, 279.
Attack and defence, 142.

BAPTISM of Lord Beaconsfield, 41.
Barrington, Lord, 39.
Basevi, Maria, 35.
Beaconsfield, Lord, as a statesman, 9; as an orator, 9; characteristics of, 10, 14; his consistency, 11; personal attacks on, 12; home policy of, 15; foreign policy of, 17; his brilliant career, 19; ancestry of, 22; birth of, 39; his schooldays, 42; in a solicitor's office, 45; journalism, 46; as an author, 47; in society, 49; his first Continental tour, 52; personal appearance, 62; visits Palestine, 69; as a novelist, 70; political *début*, 85; a candidate for Wycombe, 94; election struggles, 140; contests Taunton, 145; literary recreations, 178; elected member for Maidstone, 189; first speech in Parliament, 194; dress in early manhood, 204; Parliamentary life, 215; marriage, 217; returned for Shrewsbury, 222; and the 'Young England' party, 232; conflict with Peel, 249; his satirical powers, 268; member for Bucks, 284; leader of the Protectionist party, 295; personal and political characteristics of, 297; on the Church, 335; Chancellor of the Exchequer, 339; his first Budget, 358; second time Chancellor, 384.
Beckford of Fonthill, 63.
Belvoir Castle, 239.
Bentinck, Lord George, 283.
Bevis Marks Synagogue, 25.
Biography defined, 8.
Birthplace of Lord Beaconsfield, 39.
Blackheath, Mr. Potticary's School at, 42.
Blessington, Lady, 35, 49, 63, 178.
Bolingbroke, Lord, 16, 167.
Bradenham House, 85.
Brougham, Lord, 56, 86, 89.
Bucks, Mr. Disraeli member for, 286.
Budget, Mr. Disraeli's first, 358.
Bullen, Sir John G., 251.
Bulwers, the, 51.
Byron, Lord, 51, 53, 184.

CANDIDATURE of Mr. Disraeli for Wycombe, 100, 103.
—— for Taunton, 145.
—— for Maidstone, 188.
—— for Shrewsbury, 221.
—— for Bucks, 283.
Canning, 48, 56, 86.
Carington, Lord, 110.
Castlereagh, 62.
Catholic Emancipation, 48.
Chancellor of the Exchequer, 339, 384.
Chandos, Marquis of, 134.
Chartists, the, 47.
Chaworth, Mary, 185.
Church, Mr. Disraeli on the, 335, 366.
Civil War, 7.
Clanricarde, Marquis of, 56.
Clay, James, M.P. for Hull, 69.
Cobden, Mr., 321.
Conflict with Peel, 249.
'Coningsby,' 7, 21, 39, 217, 238.
'Contarini Fleming,' 42, 70, 80, 85.
Corn Laws, 48,
'Count Alarcos,' 84, 215.
Coutts, Mrs., 56.
Crimean War, 18, 372.
'Curiosities of Literature,' 23, 29, 37.

DEATH of Isaac D'Israeli, 37.
—— Peel, 324.
Deepdene, 244.
Defeated, but not daunted, 103.
Derby, Lord, 90, 345, 375, 384.
Disraeli, Benjamin. *See* Lord Beaconsfield.
—— —— the elder, 24.
—— Isaac, 21, 26, 38.
—— family, the, 21, 39.
—— Mrs., created Viscountess Beaconsfield, 217.
Doncaster Race Ball, 75.
D'Orsay, Count, 50, 182, 202.
Downfall of Peel, 282.
Drayton, 29.
Dupré, Mr., 285.

'EDINBURGH REVIEW,' the, 61.
Eldon, Lord, 47, 56.
Elections at High Wycombe, 96, 103.
—— Taunton, 145.
—— Maidstone, 188.
—— Shrewsbury, 221.
—— Bucks, 283.
Enfield and Isaac D'Israeli, 26.
'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers,' 53.

FAIR TRADE, 289.
Fate of Peel's Ministry, 266.
Ferdinand, King, 23.
First speech in Parliament, Mr. Disraeli's, 194.
Forester, Canon, on Lord Beaconsfield, 111.
Free Trade, 227.
French Revolution, 7.
Fugitive Pieces, 179.

GASCOIGNE, General, 90.
Gladstone, Sir John, 176.
—— William E., 167, 235, 293, 366, 375.
Goderich, Lord, 86.
Gore House, Kensington, 50.
Gortschakoff, 51, 56.
Goulburn, Mr., 143.
Graham, Sir James, 286, 375.
Grandison, Kate, 181.
Grey, Earl, 89, 133, 142.
Guicciolli, Countess, 185.

HARCOURT HOUSE, 290.
Herbert, Sidney, 375.
'Henrietta Temple,' 181.
High Wycombe, Mr. Disraeli contests, 96, 103.
Hobhouse, Sir John, 172.
Hook, Theodore, 56.
Hopes, of Deepdene, the, 245.
Houghton, Lord, 304.
Hughenden, Isaac D'Israeli's monument at, 37.
Hume and Mr. Disraeli's candidature for Wycombe, 94.

INDIA, Earl Beaconsfield's attitude towards, 17.
'Infernal Marriage, The,' 84.
Inglis, Sir R., 90.
Inquisition, the, 21, 23.
Isabella, Queen, 23.
'Iskander, The Rise of,' 84.
'Ixion in Heaven,' 84.

JEAFFRESON, on Lord Beaconsfield, 62.
Jews, The, 21.
—— —— Persecution of, 23.
Judaism, 81.

KNATCHBULL, Sir Edward, 252.

LABOUCHERE, Mr. Henry, 144.
Lamb, Lady Caroline, 56.
Leader of the Opposition, 318.
Lennox, Lord William, 56.
Lewis Wyndham, M.P., 193.
Literary life of Isaac D'Israeli, 29.
Literary Recreations, 178.
Literature and Travel, 61.
Liverpool, Lord, 48.
Londonderry, Marchioness of, 56.
Lyndhurst, Lord, 143, 161.
Lytton, Lord, 62, 95.

MACAULAY, Lord, 90.
Magna Charta, 171.
Maidstone, Mr. Disraeli returned for, 193.
Mann, Sir Horace, 25.
Manners, Sir John, 232.
Manvers, Earl, 291.
Marriage of Mr. Disraeli, 216.
Melbourne, Viscount, 89, 142, 250.
Money Panic, 48.
Moore, Tom, 51.
Moors of Venice, the, 23.

NEWCASTLE, the Duke of, 372.
Nicholas, Czar, 18.
'No Popery' agitation, 357.
Northcote, Sir Stafford, 14.

Novels, three noted, 73.
Nugent, Lord, 97.

O'CONNELL and Catholic Emancipation, 48.
—— and Mr. Disraeli's candidature for Wycombe, 94.
—— and Disraeli meet at 'Philippi,' 198.
Olives, the Mount of, 71.
Ollivier, the publisher, 305.
Omar, the Mosque of, 71.

PALESTINE, Lord Beaconsfield visits, 69.
Palmerston, Lord, 10, 62, 174, 316, 323, 378, 383.
Parliament, Mr. Disraeli's famous first speech in, 194.
Parliamentary life, 215.
Peel, Sir Robert, 13, 56, 90, 221, 223, 249, 323, 325.
Peelites, the, 289.
Perry, Mr. T. Erskine, 189.
Personal conflict with Peel, 261.
—— and political characteristics, 297.
Picciotto, Mr., 25.
Pitt, 16.
Poet, Lord Beaconsfield as a, 179.
Political début, 85.
'Popanilla,' 64.
Pope, Alexander, 29.
Portland, Duke of, 293.
'Prosperity Robinson,' 48.
Protectionist party, 285.
Protestant Panic, 334.
Pye, the Poet Laureate, 29.

QUARREL between O'Connell and Disraeli, 155.
'Quarrels of authors,' 31.
Queen Victoria and Lord Beaconsfield, 19.

RAMSAY Mr., novelist, 304.
Raper, the Misses, Lord Beaconsfield's first schoolmistresses, 41.

Rawlinson, Professor, 304.
Reform Bill of 1832, 15, 90.
Representative, The, Disraeli's assumed contributions to, 46.
'Revolutionary Epick, The,' 73, 136.
Richelieu, Duc de, 51.
Ritualism, 331.
Roebuck, Mr., 322.
Rousseau, 26.
'Runnymede,' 172.
Russell, Lord John, 17, 89, 207, 224, 283, 321, 331, 347, 376.
Rutland family, 239.

ST. CYR, Field-Marshal, 362.
San Stefano, Treaty of, 18.
Satirical powers of Lord Beaconsfield, 268.
School fights, 42.
Scott, Sir Walter, 53.
Shrewsbury, Mr. Disraeli returned for, 222.
Smith, James, 51.
Smythe, Hon. George Percy, 235, 303.
Solicitor's office, Disraeli employed in a, 45.
Spain, D'Israeli family of, 21.
Star Chamber, Disraeli's contributions to the, 46.
Strangford, Lord, 232, 300.
Success at last, 189.
'Sybil,' 238.
Sydney, Lord Henry, 239.

'TANCRED,' 70, 238.
Taunton, Mr. Disraeli contests, 145.
Tennyson, Alfred, 311.
Thompson, Col. T. P., 189.
Thoresby Park, 291.
Treaty of San Stefano, 18.
—— Utrecht, 16.
Truefit, Mr., 40.
Tuesday Night Club, 182.

UTRECHT, Treaty of, 16.

'VENETIA,' 183.
Venetian Republic, 22.
'Vindication of the English Constitution,' 161.
'Vivian Grey,' 45, 47, 48, 52, 55, 60.
Vizard, Mr., 97.
Vote of Credit, 18.

WALCOT, Dr., 29.
War and Mutiny, 361.
Welbeck Abbey, 290.
Wellington, Duke of, 86, 361.
Wesley and Whitfield, 22.
Westminster Reform Club, 105.
Whig Reform Bill of 1832, 15.
Whig interruptions to Mr. Disraeli's maiden parliamentary speech, 201.
Willis on Lord Beaconsfield, 63.
Wood, Sir Charles, 357.
Wycombe, Mr. Disraeli contests, 94, 103.

YARDLEY's attack on Mr. Disraeli, 219.
'Yeomen of Bucks, The,' 179.
'Young Duke, The,' 72, 74.
Young England movement, the, 109, 236.

INDEX TO VOL. II.

ABDUL KHAN, 277.
Aberdeen, Lord, 6.
Abergavenny, Marquis of, 313.
'Adullam, Cave of,' 72.
Afghanistan, War in, 244.
Agricultural Holdings Act, 143.
America and the Church, 115.
Anarchy in Ireland, 237.
Anti-Beaconsfield policy, the, 220.
Anxious year, an, 156.
Arabi Pacha, 246.
Argyll, Duke of, 205.
Army Promotion and Retirement Bill, 143.
Artisans' Dwellings Act, 143.
Atrocities in Bulgaria, 147.

BALL, Dr., 118.
Banquet to Lords Beaconsfield and Salisbury, 167.
Barrington, Lord, 290, 294.
Baum, Lord Beaconsfield's confidential attendant. 297.
Beaconsfield, Lord, second time Chancellor, 1; and the Church, 49; made D.C.L. of Oxford, 52; his ecclesiastical appointments, 69; appointed Premier, 93; publishes 'Lothair,' 131; Premier a second time, 138; his patriotic policy, 142; raised to an earldom, 155; at the Berlin Congress, 167; made a Knight of the Garter, 169; Californian tribute to, 175; on Ritualism, 186; and Irish affairs, 216; his Irish policy, reversed by Mr. Gladstone, 236; work in Parliament, 254; publishes 'Endymion,'
Beaconsfield—*continued.* 262; last speeches, 273; approach of death, 289; last illness, 293; death-bed scene, 297; foreign press on, 303; funeral, 312; the Queen's monument to, 320.
Beauchamp, Earl, 256.
Belt's monument to Lord Beaconsfield, 320.
Bentinck, Lord George, 37.
Berlin Congress, 164, 303.
—— the Treaty of, 178.
Birmingham Caucus, the, 230.
Bismarck, 303.
Blessington, Lady, 257, 269.
'Book of Beauty,' the, 269.
Bradford, Lord, 286.
Bright, John, 40, 47, 108, 118, 159.
Bulgarian atrocities, 147.
Burial of Lord Beaconsfield, 313.
Byron monument, 196.

CADOGAN, Lord, 286.
Cairns, Earl, 93, 206.
Californian tribute to Lord Beaconsfield, 175.
Canal Boats Act, 143.
Candahar, the surrender of, 274.
Carnarvon, Lord, 158, 229.
'Cave of Adullam,' 72.
Chelmsford, Lord, 3, 93.
Chesterfield House, 287.
Church, Lord Beaconsfield and the, 49.
Church at Hughenden, 307.
Closing days of Lord Beaconsfield's life, 288.
Cobden, Mr., 37.
Compensation for Disturbances (Ireland) Bill, 202.
Congress of Berlin, 164.
'Coningsby,' 4, 37.
Conservative Reform Bill, 5.
Conspiracy Act, 143.
Contagious Diseases Bill, 143.
Continental press on Lord Beaconsfield's death, 303.
'Corisande,' 133.
Cranborne, Lord, 87, 103.
Crimean War, 144, 275.
Cross, Mr., 121.
Curzon Street, Lord Beaconsfield's town house in, 286, 304.
Cyprus, 144, 178.

DARTMOUTH, Lord, 102.
Death of Lady Beaconsfield, 125.
—— Lord Beaconsfield, 297.
—— —— John Russell, 36.
—— —— Palmerston, 72.
Democracy, 141, 240.
Derby, Lord, 2, 52, 87, 121, 159, 315.
Disestablishment of the Irish Church, 220.
Disraeli, Benjamin. *See* Lord Beaconsfield,
Disraeli, Mrs., 113.
Dulcigno demonstration, 246.

EARL, Benjamin Disraeli created an, 154.
Eastern Question, 145.
Ecclesiastical appointments, 69.
Education, Elementary, Act, 143.
Egyptian affairs, 288.
Eliot, Captain, 312.
'Endymion' published, 261.

Epping Forest Act, 143.
Established Church, the, 182.
Expiring Laws Continuance Bill, 230.

FACTORY ACT, 143.
Failing powers of Lord Beaconsfield, 282.
Farquhar, Sir William, 249.
Federal Union, 39.
Fremantle, Hon. J., 314.
Frere, Sir Bartle and South African affairs, 245.
Friendly Societies Bill, 143.
Funeral of Lord Beaconsfield at Hughenden, 308.

GALLIPOLI, 158.
Garter, Lord Beaconsfield made a Knight of the, 169.
Gladstone, Mr. William Ewart, 23, 50, 67, 71, 97, 100, 118, 127, 138, 149, 159, 191, 200, 201, 209, 213, 220, 241, 304, 305, 315.
Gladstone-Bright Administration, 118.
Gortschakoff, 158, 162.
Granville, Lord, 157, 286.
Grey, General, 94.
Gurney, Right Hon. Russell, 185.

HANNAH, Dr., 97.
Hardy, Gathorne, 118.
Hartington, Lord, 143.
Hatfield, 89, 228.
'Henrietta Temple,' 269.
Highways Act, 143.
Home Policy, 142.
Home Rule, 211.
Horsman, Mr., 120.
Houghton, Lord, 263.
Hughenden, 125, 256, 291, 306.
—— Queen Victoria at, 195, 306.
Hunt, Mr. Ward, 93.

IGNATIEF, General, 248.
Illness and death of Lord Beaconsfield, 293.
Inclosure of Commons Bill, 143.
Increase of Bishoprics Act, 143.
Indian affairs, 3, 140, 143.
Irish Church, the, 67, 93.
Irish difficulties, 202, 213, 215.
Irish Intermediate Education Act, 143.
Irish Land Bill, 119.

JENNER, Sir William, 314.
Jews, the, 4.
Justices' Clerks Bill, 143.

KAROLYI, Count, 198.
Kidd, Dr., 314.
Kischenoff, Russian army at, 152.
Knight of the Garter, Lord Beaconsfield made a, 169.

LAST speeches in Parliament, 273.
Lawson, Sir Wilfrid, 18.
Layard, Mr., 161.
Leighton, Sir Frederick, 286.
Lesseps, M. de, 171.
Letter, a remarkable, 199.
Londonderry, Lady, 39.
'Lothair,' 131.
Love of England, Lord Beaconsfield's, 285.
Lowe, Mr., 103.
Lytton, Lord, 263.

MACARTNEY, Mr., 270.
McCullagh Torrens, Mr., 314.
Manners, Lord John, 313.
—— Lady, 287.
—— Mr. Henry, 286.
Manor of Hughenden, 257.
Marlborough, the Duke of, 202.
—— House, 293.
Mazzini, 44.
Memorial to Lord Beaconsfield, 320.
Merchant Shipping Act, 143.
Miall, Mr., 118, 244.
Midlothian speeches of Mr. Gladstone, 241.
Mill, John Stuart, 71.

NAPIER, Lord, 257.
National School Teachers (Ireland) Act, 231.
Newman, Cardinal, 132.
News of Lord Beaconsfield's death, 300.
Newstead Abbey, 196.
Northbrook, Lord, and Indian affairs, 278.
Northcote, Sir Stafford, 158.

OATHS Bill, 4.
O'Connell and Disraeli, 226.
O'Connor, Mr. T. P., on Lord Beaconsfield, 24.
Ottoman Empire, 140.
Oude land tenure, 3.
Oxford, Mr. Disraeli at, 51.

PALMER, Sir Roundell, 67.
Palmerston, Lord, 23, 29, 36, 71, 72, 227.
Palmerston policy, the, 23.
Patriotic policy, a, 144.
Peel Sir Robert, 35, 215.
Peace Preservation Bill, 143.
Peace with honour, 169.
Pitt's death-bed, 298.
Poet, Lord Beaconsfield as a, 268.
Pollution of Rivers Bill, 143.
Ponsonby, General, 312.
Poor Law Amendment Act, 143.
Porte, the, 157.
Portland, Duke of, 290.
Premier, Mr. Disraeli appointed, 93.
—— —— a second time, 138.
Prison's Act, 143.
Private life of Lord Beaconsfield at Hughenden, 260.
Protection of Property Act, 143.
Public Health Act, 143.
Public Worship Regulation Act, 181.

QUAIN, Dr., 314.
Queen Elizabeth's Oak at Hatfield, 255.

Queen Victoria at Hughenden, 195, 319.
Queen Victoria and Lord Beaconsfield's death, 306.

REFORM BILL passed, 87.
—— —— the Tory, 1.
—— —— Lord John Russell's, 31.
Reformed Catholic Church of Ireland, 100.
Regimental Exchanges Bill, 143.
Retirement of Lord Beaconsfield, 254.
Ritual in the Church, 181.
Rivers, Lord Beaconsfield on, 21.
Rose, Sir Philip, 305.
Rothschild, Mr. Alfred, 256.
—— Sir Nathaniel, 305.
Rowton, Lord, 295.
Royal Titles Bill, 143.
Russell, Lord John, 10, 31, 36, 71, 215.
Russian affairs, 152, 156.

SALISBURY, Lord, 89, 142, 166.
San Stefano, Treaty of, 163.
Schouvaloff, Count, 248.
Scotch Education Act, 143.
Selborne, Lord, 67.
Six millions vote, 158.
Slavery, American, 39.
Speeches, Mr. Gladstone's Midlothian, 241.
—— of Lord Beaconsfield: on Constitutionalism, 124; last in Parliament, 273; Reform, 11, 91; the Church, 60; Eastern Question, 149; Treaty of Berlin, 178.
Spottiswoode Subscription, the, 225.
Stanley, Dean, offers a tomb for Lord Beaconsfield in Westminster Abbey, 304.
Stansfeld, Mr., and Mazzini, 44.
'Sybil,' 5.
Suez Canal, 144, 171.
Sutherland, Duke of, 286.

TERMINABLE ANNUITIES, 71.
Thames, the, 21.
Transvaal, the, 246.
Treaty of San Stefano, 163.
Turkish affairs, 156.
—— atrocities, 163.

ULTRA-RITUALISTIC party, the, 189.
United States, Civil War in the, 39.
University Act, 143.
University (Ireland) Bill, 127.
Unseaworthy Ships Act, 143.

VAMBERY, Professor, on Indian affairs, 277.
Van Baerle, W. H., 312.
'Venetia,' 256, 262.
Vernon, Arthur, 312.
Villiers, Mr. C., 314.
Vote of six millions, 158.

WEBSTER, Daniel, quoted, 288.
Welbeck, 290.
Westminster Abbey, proposal to bury Lord Beaconsfield in, 304, 305.
Whig party and Mr. Gladstone, 205.
Wilberforce, Bishop, 55.
Will of Lord Beaconsfield, extracts from, 305, 318.
Wilton, Lord Grey de, 127.
Wit and wisdom of Lord Beaconsfield, 267.
Woods, Sir Albert, 314.
Work in retirement, 254.

YEAR, an anxious, 156.
'Young Duke, The,' 256.

ZULULAND, war in, 171.

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B

APPENDIX.

MISCELLANEOUS FACTS AND INCIDENTS.

The following miscellany of facts and incidents, gleaned from a variety of sources, cannot fail, we think, to be deeply interesting, and constitute a useful addendum to all that has gone before:—

LORD G. HAMILTON AND LORD BEACONSFIELD.

Lord George Hamilton, M.P., thus refers to the special attributes of the late Lord Beaconsfield—describing the nature of the tactics he had to contend against, and how his habits of self restraint and reserve aided the false charges so frequently made against him:—'Lord Beaconsfield, like all great men, was subject to much calumny and much libel. It is the penalty which all great men pay for their greatness. But I doubt if any man ever lived in this country who was more systematically calumniated and misrepresented than our late distinguished leader. It really seemed at one time as if there were a conspiracy amongst a certain number of people to misrepresent everything he did, and to misinterpret everything he said. And there are many people in this world who believe everything they are told. I am bound to say that I find too many of my Radical opponents ready to accept anything, provided it be to the disadvantage of their opponents. So, little by little, by the dint of constant reiteration an impression was formed outside by those who did not know Lord Beaconsfield's character, objects, and past career, utterly at variance with truth. He was represented as a cynical, reckless man, thinking only of his aggrandisement, and ready for that purpose on any flimsy pretext to involve his country in war. I had the honour of the most personal acquaintance with the late lord, and I can say this truly, that I never met a kinder man in his private capacity, or a more patriotic and prescient man in his public capacity. No man could have mourned more than he did for any loss of life which resulted either from any necessary enterprise or national disaster. But as a bold and determined man, he always held that, as this country was the richest in Europe, and had the most material interests to protect in different parts of the globe, the best method to protect these interests, when we had reason to believe foreign nations were about to attack us, was plainly to tell those nations we would defend ourselves

by the sword, and that if we adopted such plain language we should certainly avert the war which all wished to avoid. And be it recollected to his credit, that in the most critical crisis of European affairs he avoided involving England in war in Europe, whereas twenty-eight years ago, when his great rival Mr. Gladstone had to deal with a similar difficulty, he involved us in the Crimean War. You can quite understand how a man constituted as Lord Beaconsfield was—who was so reserved, and exercised that self-control which, until the advent of the present government, we were accustomed to associate with our statesmen—you can quite understand how such a man was easily liable to misrepresentation, and that when the great mass of the Liberal press, and many of that political party, combined themselves together for the purpose of running down the reputation, or career, of a man who scorned to reply, the falsehoods which were promulgated against him became in the minds of many persons accepted facts. Thus at last it became in the minds of many of our political opponents a cardinal point in their creed that Lord Beaconsfield was the author of all evil, that he represented all that was bad in human nature, and that his rival represented all that was good. There was great obstruction in the House of Commons. Mr. Gladstone wrote an article to say that Lord Beaconsfield's government was the promoter of that obstruction. The Eastern Question suddenly arose in 1875. Mr. Gladstone again wrote to prove that Lord Beaconsfield was the sole cause of the upheaval of that question. There was great distress in trade and in agriculture; it was Lord Beaconsfield's policy which caused that distress. Ireland was governed by him with less coercion than any other Minister in the present century, but because the Peace Preservation Act was associated with Lord Beaconsfield's name it was not to be renewed. Thus all that was bad and all that was evil was so associated with Lord Beaconsfield that many honest Liberals believed that all that was necessary to get rid of our troubles was to get him and his government out of office. Lord Beaconsfield is gone, but have all our troubles ended? His death and the present state of public affairs give the lie direct to the greater part of the indictment which with such skill and such persistency was framed against the late Administration.

'WHAT IS HE?'

We have given (p. 115, vol. I.) a brief reference to the remarkable pamphlet which Mr. Disraeli issued in 1833, with the view of making clear to the critics by whom he was assailed what were the nature of his political projects, and of the opinions and circumstances by which he was influenced at this early period of his political career. It may interest some readers if we amplify the outline heretofore given of this most interesting production, a copy of which is before us. It commences with a reference to the fact that the Tories had declared their inability to carry on the government of the country with the present state of

machinery, and that as the Whigs could not, a third party had arisen which proposed certain additions and alterations in this state of machinery by the aid of which they believed the government of the country might be conducted. The government before the recent change (the Reform Bill) was based upon an aristocratic principle, and as the principle was decided the practice was vigorous. By the recent change they had deserted the old principle without adopting a new one. As the government had no impelling principle it could not act, and as it was essential to obtain a strong government they must discover some principle on which it could be founded. They must either revert to the aristocratic, or advance to the democratic. Believing it utterly impossible to revert to the aristocratic principle, he felt it absolutely necessary to advance to a new one. Superficial observers could not understand how a measure which was so essentially aristocratic as the Reform Act had produced such threatening consequences to the aristocratic principles of government, but the aristocratic principle had been destroyed, not by the Reform Act, but by the means by which the Reform Act was passed. The Whigs, who, with a Sovereign and a House of Commons alike pledged to their purpose, were nevertheless so incapable that they could not contrive to carry a substantive measure of reform through the unpledged yet weakest estate of the realm without exciting a deadly struggle between the House of Lords and the political unions. The Lords had to pass the Bill from menace instead of conviction, and the moment they did so the aristocratic principle expired. If the Tories despaired of restoring it, it was their duty to coalesce with the Radicals, and permit both political nicknames to merge in the dignified title of a National Party. Mr. Disraeli goes on to state the reasons which led him to believe that the aristocratic principle could not be restored, defines the measures which he thinks would lead to the creation of a strong government, and thus concludes:—'It is wise to be sanguine in public as well as in private life, yet the sagacious statesman must view the present portents with anxiety, if not with terror. It would sometimes appear that the loss of our great colonial empire must be the necessary consequence of our prolonged domestic dissensions. Hope, however, lingers to the last. In the sedate but vigorous character of the British nation we may place great confidence. Let us not forget also an influence too much underrated in this age of bustling mediocrity—the influence of individual character. Great spirits may yet arise to guide the groaning helm through the world of troubled waters; spirits whose proud destiny it may still be at the same time to maintain the glory of the empire, and to secure the happiness of the people.'

'THE CRISIS EXAMINED.'

The pamphlet entitled "The Crisis Examined," issued in 1834 (*vide* p. 135, vol. I.), was a much longer and much more important production than the one

we have just noticed. It was, specially for so young a politician, full of sound reasoning, and written with remarkable spirit and vigour. We here quote Mr. Disraeli's early opinions as therein expressed, on several important topics: Of the Irish Church he said he would never consent to its revenues being appropriated to any other objects save the interests of the Church. It was the interest of the people to support the Church, for the Church was their patrimony, their only hereditary property: it was their portal to power, their avenue to learning, to distinction, and to honour. As to the Irish Land, he was in favour of a well-regulated system of Poor Law, but not of that system which had recently made all England to thrill with feelings of horror and indignation. With regard to the Dissenters, he would grant all those claims which were not inconsistent with the established constitution of the country—all the claims that were consistent with the maintenance of an Established Church, a blessing which he was resolved to uphold, because he considered it a guarantee of civilisation, and a barrier against bigotry. The Whigs had opened business with their three favourite articles—peace, reform, and retrenchment. Their peace consisted of blockades, their reform of the creation of commissionerships, and their retrenchment of the cutting down of clerks. He thus continues:—

'But they say they have taken off taxes. Could they avoid doing so? No minister could go on a session without taking off taxes long before the Reform Bill. Have they exceeded the other party in their ratio of progressive relief? I say no! The Whigs plunged you into a revolution. For what? To take the duty off stone bottles! Or, if indeed we are to "wake to a louder and more loftier strain," is your consolation for four years of misery to be found in the Irish Coercion Bill, or the English Poor Law Bill, their increase of the army, or their defence of the pension list? I will grant that they have undertaken some great questions; but have they disposed of any? A practical statesman would have settled them in a session; but for the Whigs their philosophy ends in a report, and their patriotism in a job.'

Nevertheless, they had urged that the country ought not to accept any measure, however desirable, from those who had opposed the Reform Bill. Admit the proposition of men and not measures, and the party that introduced the Reform Bill were masters for life. Still assailing the Whigs, and exposing their object, he continues on page 19:—

'I would say that no claims can entitle them to become the masters for life of the British people: and, for my own part, I have no doubt, and I have ever thought, that they intended to become our masters for life: and decidedly they would have gained their object had they succeeded in swamping the House of Peers, as well as packing the House of Commons. . . . . Had it succeeded, it well fits us to consider what would have then become of the liberties of England. I do assure you, that in drawing your attention to this important topic, I am not influenced by any party,—any electioneering views. The remarks which I shall venture to make upon it have pressed upon my mind in the calmness and solitude of study. I will allow for the freedom of the press: I will allow for the spirit of the age: I will allow for the march of intellect: but I cannot force from my mind the conviction that a House of Commons, concentrating in itself the whole power of the State, might—I should rather say would—notwithstanding the great antagonist forces to which I have alluded, establish in this country a despotism of the most formidable and dangerous character. I repeat I cannot resist the conviction, because I cannot shut my eyes to historical truth.'

Turning to the Long Parliament, as illustrating the dangers which must ensue where one department of the state alone became predominant, he thus writes of it:—

'Your House of Commons, in which you are now called upon to place implicit confidence, your boasted House of Commons which I for one will no more trust than any other human institution—your omnipotent House of Commons, after pulling down the throne and decapitating the monarch, after having expelled the Bishops from the House of Peers, and then abrogated the Peerage, set you at defiance—they concentrated in themselves all the powers of the State, and then voted their sittings perpetual: they began by quarrelling with the king about one hundred thousand pounds, and ended, in the short space of five years, in imposing upon the people burdens to the amount of forty millions sterling, confiscated the estates of a large portion of their fellow subjects, divided themselves into separate committees, and monopolised in their own persons all the functions of the State, and finally on one morning divided among themselves three hundred thousand pounds of the public money. Did I say *finally?* Can we forget that this same House of Commons, when their rapacity had dried up all other sources of spoliation, invented that tax most odious to Englishmen, the Excise? and which they too laid, not merely upon the luxuries, but the very necessaries of existence.

'Looking then at such consequences of an implicit confidence in the House of Commons, I confess myself reluctant to quit the vantage ground on which the constitution of the country is now felicitously placed. Looking at such consequences, I think we may feel that we have some interest in maintaining the prerogative of the Crown and the privileges of the Peers. I, for one, shall ever view with a jealous eye the proceedings of any House of Commons, however freely chosen. Nor have I ever marked in the conduct of the reformed House of Commons anything, I confess, to lull me into over confidence or security. I think I perceive, even thus early in their career, some symptoms of jobbing which would not disgrace the Long Parliament itself; and some instances of servility which perhaps we must go to the reign of Charles II. to rival.'

Mr. Disraeli then attacks the Reform Ministry with that keen sarcasm for which he was so famous. After tracing the history of the 'United Cabinet,' he describes how Lord Melbourne 'with as serious a face as he could command informed his Majesty that the remains of the United Cabinet—Sir John Hobhouse and Lord John Russell—were still as united as ever, and he ended by proposing that the House of Commons should be led by his Lordship, who, on the same principle that "bad wine produces good vinegar," has somehow turned from a tenth-rate author into a first-rate politician. And then Lord Melbourne says that the king turned them out. Why, gentlemen, his Majesty laughed them out. The truth is that this famous ministry, this great United Cabinet, had degenerated into a grotesque and Hudibrastic faction, the very lees of ministerial existence, the very offal of official life. They were a ragged regiment, compared with which Falstaff's crew was a band of regulars. The king would not march through Coventry with them, that was flat!' Then follows the famous comparison with Ducrow which we have already referred to (p. 140, vol. I.)

'THE REVOLUTIONARY EPICK.'

So much controversy arose as to the drift and purport of 'The Revolutionary Epick' which Mr. Disraeli issued as a young man in 1834,—and it became the subject, like all his early manifestoes, of so much misrepresentation (*see* p. 48, Vol. II.),—that he wisely resolved in 1864 to publish a new edition, so that the public might judge for themselves of the nature of its contents. The new edition was gracefully dedicated to Lord Stanley, and the only corrections which the author felt called upon to make were 'purely literary.' The poem is throughout rich in imagery, while its teaching, so far from being unwise or

unsound, is alike instructive, sensible, and profitable. The poem is divided into two books, 'Magis' and 'Lyridon,' and at the end of the work is another poem, on 'The Conquest of Italy.' As the book has been thus made accessible through its re-issue by its noble author, it is not necessary for us to describe it at any length, but we venture to give a brief extract as a specimen of its opinions, and the forcibility of its diction. Take for instance the delusive cry of 'equality,' which, along with the equally plausible ones of 'liberty' and 'fraternity' are made so much use of in their perverted interpretations by designing demagogues. Mr. Disraeli writes:—

Equality! the cry
Of feeble spirits. Is it truth? or plea
Flimsy the heart rejects; though lips may move
In plausible assent for wily end?
Is Nature equal? Doth she say to man,
Go mark the mountain in the vale subside;
The ocean and the brook their waters share,
See the bright stars with equal radiance blaze,
With equal sweet the fragrant flowers bloom?
And thou, Leviathan, whose heaving bulk
Calls the quick colour from the sailor's cheek, &c.

* * * * *

In truth, the spell of Nature's
Sway Gradation: hence the faculty divine,
Of Durability, from which alone
Order and happiness and life; and hence
Of parts discordant one harmonious whole,
And fitter type for man will sophists find
Than this Supreme creation. Shall the world
This social atom forms reject the ties
That things divine can bear? What veil,
Dark prophets of Equality, conceals
Of all your busy arts the fate? Their end
To level, not to raise, where equal all,
All are debased.

Then he goes on to ask,

What constitutes a People? Not a crowd
Of vagrant beings like a locust horde
Over some fertile land their fatal wings
Furling with full intent. Not spawn obscure
Of slime-begotten entities, the froth
Of some subsiding deluge that a ray
Calls from their oozy womb, a doltish crew
Staring with wonder on their misshaped selves,
And banqueting on berries. But the lore
Long centuries yield; refined arts; and faith,
Honour and justice; love of fatherland
By olden thoughts endeared; the mystic spell
Moon-eyed Tradition weaves.

* * * * *

Nor last, that discipline
To culture man instinctive, that the weak
In their more able brethren, leaders apt
Prompts to confession. In multitudes thus formed
A throne majestic yielding, dignity
Of ermined noble gentry, like hearths
Cordial and bright, and hallowed life of priest
And reverend magistrates, whose voice serene
Stills human passions—we a PEOPLE find

Such is a very brief specimen of the salutary teaching which this much decried and much misrepresented poem contains, and we need not stay to show how impossible it is that any young man of genius, animated by such wise reflections as these, and capable on his entrance into public life of giving forcible expression to them, could have had opinions in common with the ultra-Radical section. The poem being written in blank verse, and being in some other respects unattractive, did not achieve popularity; though it deserved to be widely read for the sound sentiments it contained on many highly important topics. Its wider circulation in these days would not, we believe, be unattended with advantageous results.

MR. DISRAELI AND BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

A careful search through the files of the Buckinghamshire papers has brought to light much interesting information, as it might naturally be expected to do, seeing Mr. Disraeli's intimate association with the county for so many years, not only as a resident within it, but as one of its representatives in the House of Commons. Many of his great political manifestoes consisted of speeches or letters to his constituents, while he found occasion at various non-political gatherings to utter many wise and instructive remarks on educational, agricultural, and social topics. It would have somewhat interrupted the thread of our narrative had we broken off, here and there, to introduce these addresses, and we have thought it best, therefore, to allow them to constitute the material for a separate article. We now present the details we have been able to glean:—

EQUAL TAXATION AND CHEAP CAPITAL.

On Wednesday, Sept. 12th, 1849, Mr. Disraeli, at a meeting of the Royal Bucks Agricultural Association, described the position of agriculture as one of great suffering. He said farmers paid double the Poor Rates paid by other classes. Let the farmers declare, 'We want equal taxation and cheap capital. That would bring a state of prosperity which in that dark hour it was not easy to contemplate.' On October 5th, 1849, speaking at a Conservative meeting at Castle Hedingham, Essex, Mr. Disraeli said:—'First of all ask for equal taxation, and no one with a feeling of justice can deny your right. And the interests of this great party are thus associated with justice. So with regard to the maintenance of public credit. You do not ask for peculiar advantages,—you do not demand exceptional legislation. There is no class legislation in a nation paying its debts. There is no peculiar privilege in paying taxes for other people. (Cheers and laughter.) Now, am I right in supposing that the yeomen of Essex will adopt these principles? (Loud cries of "Yes, yes.") But am I right in supposing that the yeomen of Essex mean to act upon them? (Tremendous cries of "Yes, yes.") Because we live in times when cheers round a convivial board will not save the country. (Cheers.) . . . . Write upon your banners, "Justice and honesty," and depend upon it the nation will sympathise with you. . . . . In this age of perfidy and cowardice, I am not ashamed to say that I am prepared to uphold and maintain the constitutional preponderance of the land of England. I do so because I recognize all the institutions which have made our country so eminent as having their root in the land—that immemorial throne which reconciles the majesty of the law with the freedom of the subject—the sacred spires of that patriot church that has at all times guarded the popular privileges and formed the national character—the brave front of those high spirited Parliaments that have educated the people of

England in a comprehensive and practically enlightened freedom; because I recognize in the territorial principle the real and only source of stability in the State; because in the laws, the manners, the customs, the influence, the traditions connected with the land, I see the origin of the noble and indefatigable ambition that pervades all classes of the community; the true aristocratic principle that has taught every Englishman—at the plough or at the loom—in the gilded saloon or in the ermined senate—that it is his privilege to aspire, and his duty to excel.' (Great cheering.)

MR. COBDEN AND THE FARMER.

On Tuesday, January 7th, 1850, Mr. Disraeli spoke at an agricultural distress meeting of the farmers at Marlow. Referring to a speech delivered shortly before, at Leeds, by Mr. Cobden, Mr. Disraeli said:—'Twelve months ago, when I brought that subject (the movement to free agriculturists from peculiar burdens) forward in the House of Commons, Mr. Cobden would not condescend to offer any reasons for opposing it, and now at Leeds he makes the speech which he ought to have made in the House of Commons, giving reasons which he thinks conclusive against our demands. Not content with that he goes to Aylesbury to-morrow to open the minds of the deluded farmers of Bucks. (Laughter.) Why, all this proves the harpoon is in the great fish. (Great cheers.) We have got him. I feel that I have him on the hook, and there I mean him to remain. (Great cheering.) I don't mean to land him easily. I'll give him line enough, I shall play with him; but if I don't at last land the large trout on the verdant turf, supported by the electors of Bucks, I am mistaken. (Tremendous cheers.) . . . . Now, gentlemen, I have had some experience in public life, and during that time I have seen a great deal done, and more pretended, than what are called moral means, and being naturally of a thoughtful temperament, I have been induced to analyse what moral means are. I will tell you what I have found them to consist of. I have found them to consist of three qualities: first, enormous lying; second, inexhaustible boasting; thirdly, intense selfishness. (Great applause.) These are moral means—the means of the Manchester school, which Mr. Cobden is to explain and recommend in our county town to-morrow.'

IN THE HUNTING FIELD.

On the 6th February, 1853, the author of 'Coningsby,' attending a meet of Mr. Lumley's fox hounds in Serlby Park, three cheers were given for Mr. Disraeli by the tenant farmers, 'knowing as they did,' says the *Bucks Herald*, 'that their friend, their advocate, and unflinching supporter would hear and feel the grateful sense they all entertained for such unbounded sympathy in their cause.' Mr. Disraeli condescendingly acknowledged the cheers. Mrs. Disraeli, who was present, conversed freely with several ladies in the field.

'SPEED THE PLOUGH.'

On Wednesday, Sept. 12th, 1853, Mr. Disraeli delivered an address to agricultural labourers at the meeting of the Royal Bucks Agricultural Association at Aylesbury. He said, 'I have recently read, and no doubt all of you have done the same, on the information of a gentleman of considerable authority in such matters, that the plough would be, and is in fact, superseded. We have at all times thought that whatever revolution occurred, either in circumstances or even in opinions, it is always safe to say, "Speed the plough;" but now we live in an age, and have arrived at a period, when it is very doubtful whether, in saying "Speed the plough," we may not be almost as old fashioned as we were to say, "Success to the jarvey." . . . . Though the plough be superseded, let there be no change in our moral principle; let us make the English labourer understand that if he cease to be a ploughman, he is still a member of a community that respects his virtues if he shows them.' Referring to that speech a local paper says:—'The principle of protection to native agriculture is now given up; the theory of free trade, whether just or unjust, is admitted; and none are more willing than the agriculturists themselves to consider this once vexed question as settled, and to abstain from all agitation and discussion on the subject. Hence Mr. Disraeli's silence on questions of general politics, and hence his observations were confined to such topics as were suggested by the nature, the objects, and the operations of the Royal Bucks Agricultural Association.'

A VISIT TO BELGIUM.

On Sept. 20th, 1856, the *Bucks Herald* says:—'The most respectful and dignified attention welcomed the right hon. the member for Bucks to Belgium. His privacy was not invaded; curiosity to see the celebrated leader of Parliamentary Conservatism did not transgress the proper limits; but an open and ready courtesy, that only awaited the sign of permission to be extended to any degree, proclaimed the acknowledgment of high worth, and the satisfaction that such visit caused to persons of all ranks and opinions.'

UNRESTRICTED COMPETITION.

Speaking at a meeting of the Royal Bucks Agricultural Association at Buckingham, on the 30th Sept., 1856, Mr. Disraeli said:—'We cannot conceal from ourselves that our soil is now subject to unrestricted competition. The time has passed when we can enter into any discussion as to the policy or impolicy of such a state of affairs; but we should be madmen if we shut our eyes to it, and did not resolve to meet it by the only means by which it can be successfully encountered and triumphantly vanquished, namely, by a continuation of the energy and enterprise which for years have distinguished the efforts of the farmers of this country.'

'HONOURABLE PEACE, REDUCED TAXATION, AND SOCIAL IMPROVEMENT.'

In his address to the electors of the county of Bucks, dated March 17th, 1857, at the general election, he said:—

To the Electors of the County of Buckingham.

GENTLEMEN,—The House of Commons having, by a solemn vote, in which the leading men of all parties concurred, censured the cruel and double-dealing policy pursued by the agents of the government towards the Chinese, Parliament has been dissolved.

Since the announcement of the dissolution, the Minister has declared that his agents in China will be superseded, thus acknowledging the justness of the vote of the House of Commons. It is clear, therefore, that the plea for dissolution is a pretext. What then is the real object? To waste a year.

Lord Palmerston is an eminent man, who has deserved well of his country; but, as Prime Minister, he occupies a false position. He is the Tory chief of a Radical Cabinet. With no domestic policy, he is obliged to divert the attention of the people, from the consideration of their own affairs, to the distraction of Foreign Politics. His external system is turbulent and aggressive, that his rule at home may be tranquil and unassailed. Hence arises excessive expenditure, heavy taxation, and the stoppage of all social improvement.

His scheme of conduct is so devoid of all political principle that when forced to appeal to the people his only claim to their confidence is his name. Such arts and resources may suit the despotic ruler of a continental State exhausted by revolutions, but they do not become a British Minister governing a country, proud, free, and progressive, animated by glorious traditions, and aspiring to future excellence.

The honour and the best interests of the country require that men should be returned to the new Parliament with definite principles. If you will confer on me, for the fourth time, the high distinction of being your member, I will, as heretofore, uphold our Constitution in Church and State, and support those popular and aristocratic institutions which, in this country, have made power a privilege, but have extended the possession of that privilege to all who exert themselves to deserve it—institutions which have educated a nation to aspire and excel.

The general policy which I would enforce at this juncture may be contained in these words,—Honourable peace, reduced taxation, and social improvement.

There is an attempt at the present day to play off the parties which exist, and have always to a certain degree existed in the Church, against each other for political objects. This is a dangerous course for churchmen to sanction. The Church which, irrespective of its higher functions, is one of the great guarantees of English happiness, has foes enough without seeking for them in her own bosom; and it would appear to me that, instead of quarrelling among themselves, churchmen should evince mutual forbearance, unite on the common ground of ecclesiastical polity, and oppose all efforts to impair the integrity of that Reformed Church of England which is the best security for the religious liberty of all classes and creeds of her Majesty's subjects.

I have the honour to remain, your obliged and faithful servant,

Hughenden Manor, March 17th. B. DISRAELI.

The *Bucks Herald* says of the address:—'A document more suited to the juncture in which we find ourselves could not have been penned by any statesman.'

NOMINATION EXPERIENCES.

At the nomination at Aylesbury, on March 31st, 1857, Mr. Disraeli delivered a speech in which he strongly condemned the conduct of the late government. In the course of his remarks he was frequently interrupted. He said:—'We have opposed no measures which they brought forward with the view of placing great resources at their disposal. The only course which we took was to stimulate their exertions, and the only objections we ever urged were objections to the inefficient way in which the resources placed at their disposal were applied.'

An elector: Yes; knowing that the people were with you.

Mr. Disraeli: Well, I should be very sorry to find that the people of this country were not with their government when the nation was involved in a severe struggle with a great military power.

Further on in the same speech Mr. Disraeli said: I tell you fairly that I don't regret that the dissolution took place.

A voice: You won't like the result though.

Mr. Disraeli: Well, I consider I am as good a judge of the results of the dissolution as my friend.

The voice: Do you like the result as far as it is known? Give an answer, and don't chaff. (Laughter.)

Mr. Disraeli: I will tell you why I am extremely glad there has been a dissolution, and why I shall be very well satisfied with the result. I think the tendency of this dissolution will be to bring back what is necessary for the good government of this country—two great political parties with definite opinions.

Speaking upon electoral districts and the ballot, Mr. Disraeli said: Upon these it is desirable that the people of Buckinghamshire should have matured opinions.

A voice: We want the ballot and electoral districts.

Mr. Disraeli: You shall have them both—in argument. (Great laughter.)

An elector: Quite right.

Mr. Disraeli: Well, that gentleman wants the ballot. A great many say that population and property are two different things; but to simplify the argument I will admit that population and property go together. But the real point to consider is that population and representation should go together, and to effect that end it is proposed to have electoral districts. Remember there is no longer to be a county of Buckingham.

An elector: So much the better.

Mr. Disraeli: Then Buckinghamshire is to be blotted out of the political map, and probably you may have departments as in France, taking their names from the nearest rivers. . . Is there an elector so false to the glory of Buckinghamshire, and to the glory of his own position, that he is prepared to set the Thames on fire? (Laughter.)

An elector: That's sublime.

Mr. Disraeli: No; it is not sublime, it is funny. I have heard of a step from the sublime to the ridiculous, but my friend takes a step from the ridiculous to the sublime. (Loud cheers and laughter.) . . I want you to consider the question whether you would put an end to Buckinghamshire altogether.

An elector: I would disfranchise it altogether. (Laughter.)

Mr. Disraeli: I do not think you are one of the electors cf Buckinghamshire.

An elector: Yes, I am.

Mr. Disraeli: Then you ought not to be. (Loud cheers and laughter.) Continuing, he said, I contend that if you pursue this policy you put an end not only to Buckinghamshire, but to the country. . . Understand, you are to have in connection with the ballot a very extensive suffrage, say household suffrage, exercised in secret. Well, do you mean to say that a lord-lieutenant of a county is to have no more influence on the legislation and government of the country than some man, perhaps, in his service, and receiving weekly wages, but in consequence of the tenure of a house exercising the franchise? . . I for one say that I would rather have an equal and open vote than a secret vote, and be subject to the plurality of voting.

An elector: I want the voters to be protected.

Mr. Disraeli: Do you mean that every man is to have a vote, and to exercise it in secret? Do you mean that property is to have no influence on the election of members of Parliament? The experiment has been tried in France, and what is the result? They elected a body of men who exercised no control or influence upon opinion. . . I believe the same thing would happen in this country. You would go on changing and changing your Parliament, until at last it would become a thing that you yourselves despised.

THE CHURCH RATE CONTROVERSY.

On Wednesday, May 20th, 1857, Mr. Disraeli addressed his constituents at Newport Pagnell. In that speech he spoke of the movement against church rates as a political movement. He said it was clear that a church rate could not be levied in any district unless there was a predominant opinion in its favour. It was impossible to deny that in the question was involved the whole subject of Church establishment. It was clear that every objection which was urged against church rates might be urged against tithes, and might even be carried to a greater length. If the conscientious objection of individuals was to be allowed to prevail against the maintenance of a national institution, he was at a loss to know how any national institution of this country was to be upheld.

THE MUTINY—'JUSTICE BUT NOT VENGEANCE.'

Mr. Disraeli spoke at the annual meeting of the Royal Bucks Agricultural Association, on Wednesday, October 30th, 1857. Referring to the Indian Mutiny, he said:—'I regret to say that we do not see the preparation which the occasion seems to justify. . . How is it that all this time the navy of England never appears to have played any part in the measures of preservation to which we have had recourse? We are told that it is mainly by availing ourselves of our gunboats that we shall be able to penetrate into the interior, and convey succour to our beleaguered countrymen. But there is not a gunboat in India! What are the fifty frigates in England doing? Where are they?

Why are they not there? . . I am persuaded that our soldiers and our sailors will exact a retribution which it may perhaps be too terrible to pause upon. But I do, without the slightest hesitation, declare my humble disapprobation at persons of high authority announcing that upon the standard of England "vengeance" and not "justice" should be inscribed.'

THE ALLIANCE OF ENGLAND AND FRANCE.

On the defeat of the government, and the accession of Lord Derby to power in February, 1858, Mr. Disraeli, seeking re-election on taking office as Chancellor of the Exchequer, issued the following address :—

To the Electors of the County of Buckingham.

GENTLEMEN,—The Queen having confided to the Earl of Derby the duty of forming an Administration, Her Majesty has been graciously pleased to confer upon me the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer.

I resign, therefore, into your hands the trust which for ten years you have extended to me as your member in the House of Commons; but as you have thought fit on several occasions to renew that mark of approbation, I beg leave to announce that on the day of election I shall solicit the honor of being, for the fifth time, your representative in Parliament.

The circumstances of the country are, in many respects, critical; and in none more so, than in its external relations. Painful misconceptions have arisen with the government of that faithful and powerful ally, who, in so many instances, has proved his good feeling and fidelity to this country. Believing that a cordial alliance between England and France is equally conducive to the interests of both countries, I shall express my hope and conviction that, by measures at once firm and conciliatory, these causes of misunderstanding may be speedily and entirely removed.

If the country will heartily support the Queen's government at this conjuncture, a result so desirable for the peace and progress of Europe will be greatly facilitated.

Believe me, yours sincerely, B. DISRAELI.

Grosvenor Gate, 26th February, 1858.

A REFORM BILL IMPERATIVE.

The nomination took place on Monday, March 8th, 1858, and Mr. Disraeli was returned unopposed. In the course of a speech delivered then he said:— 'I am convinced that it is the opinion of the people of this country that this question should be settled, aye or no; that if a Reform Bill is necessary it must be produced and it will be carried, and that if it is unnecessary a minister who is not prepared to grapple with the question ought frankly to state his conviction. Now in my opinion, and in the opinion of those with whom I act, it is totally impossible that this question which has been so introduced to the notice of the country by the propositions of ministers, and by the recommendations in favour of its consideration from her Majesty herself, can any longer be trifled with, and to that subject we shall give an earnest and anxious consideration. . . I am told, I read in the newspapers where we get all our information, I am told that we are a "government on sufferance."'

A voice: 'It's true, too!'

Mr. Disraeli: 'A gentleman there says "it's true." Well, now, I flatly contradict that honourable gentleman. (Laughter.) . . In 1852 we might have remained in power, and we were solicited by our opponents to remain

in power, if we would consent to be a government on sufferance. As the organ of the government, I said in the House of Commons that we never would be a government on sufferance, and we quitted office because we would not be a government on sufferance.'

A MEMORABLE EVENING DESCRIBED.

On Wednesday, May 26th, 1858, Mr. Disraeli attended a Conservative banquet at Slough, upwards of five hundred of the clergy and gentry of the county sitting down. Speaking of the attempt made by Mr. Cardwell to overthrow the government, he said:—'There is nothing like that last Friday evening in the history of the House of Commons. . . What ensued I can only liken to the mutiny of the Bengal army with which we are so familiar. . . Gentlemen, it was, I may say, rather like a convulsion of nature than one of the ordinary transactions of human life. I can only liken it to one of those earthquakes in Calabria or Peru of which we sometimes read. There was a rumbling murmur—(cheers and laughter)—a groan—a shriek—a distant thunder; and nobody knew whether it came from the top or the bottom of the House. (Cheers and laughter.) There was a rent, a fissure in the ground. Then a village disappeared. Then a tall tower toppled down. And then the Opposition benches became one great dissolving view of anarchy.' (Loud and protracted cheering.) A kindred illustration to this was used in the right hon. gentleman's famous Manchester speech, when he described the ministry of the day as 'a range of extinct volcanoes. No flame now flickers on the pallid crest, but the neighbourhood is dangerous. There are earthquakes, and ever and anon the rumbling of the sea.'

DEFENCE NOT DEFIANCE.

At the nomination in the general election contest in 1859, Mr. Disraeli spoke at Aylesbury on Monday, May 2nd. He gave at great length his views on foreign policy, saying that the policy of England was a policy of peace. The interference of England in other countries in order to change their domestic institutions, or to influence their internal policy, whatever might be the motive, was invariably a mistake. But although the interest of England was eminently the promotion of peace, it was of the utmost importance that England should be prepared for war.

CHURCH AND STATE.

Speaking at a meeting of clergy and laity at Prestwood, Bucks, in December, 1860, Mr. Disraeli referred at some length to church matters. He said he shrank from realising what would be the consequences to the country on the termination of the connection between Church and State. The termination

of the alliance must break up our political constitution. Our political constitution was built up on our parochial constitution. The parish was one of the strongest securities of local government; and on local government political liberty mainly depended. The fact was, the Church of England was part of England. At a meeting of Churchmen at Aylesbury, on Thursday, Nov. 14th, 1861, Mr. Disraeli spoke upon the use of Diocesan Societies in the Church of England. He said, in the course of his speech, 'I should grieve to see this great Church of England, this centre of light, learning, and liberty, sink into a position, relative to the nation, similar to that now filled by the Episcopal Church of Scotland, or possibly ever subside into a fastidious, not to say finical congregation. . . Broadly and deeply planted in the land, mixed up with all our manners and customs, one of the main guarantees of our local government, and therefore one of the prime securities of our common liberties, the Church of England is part of our history, part of our life, part of England itself. . . The question of church rates is the great domestic question of the day. . . I hold that the carrying of a measure for the total and unconditional abolition of church rates would be a signal blow at the alliance between Church and State. . . And under no circumstances that I can conceive should it be granted.'

THE DIS-UNITED STATES.

At the dinner of the North-West Bucks. Agricultural Association, on Wednesday, Sept. 17th, 1862, Mr. Disraeli spoke, and referred in feeling terms to the war then raging between the States of America. He said, 'Happy the land where freedom and reverence go hand in hand; and proud may England be at this moment where experience has proved in so transcendent a manner that we have solved the most difficult problem of politics, and have combined not only freedom with order, but progress with tradition.'

THE HOUSES OF THE POOR.

At the Royal and Central Bucks. Agricultural dinner at Aylesbury, on October 1st, 1862, Mr. Disraeli spoke on agricultural matters, and intimated his intention of offering a prize the next year to the agricultural labourer who should pay most attention to his residence. 'If you wish to improve the residences of the poor,' he said, 'you must create in them that spirit which appreciates the propriety of a home. . . And in order to do that you must appeal to that spirit of emulation which is the author of all excellence in society.'

LORD BEACONSFIELD ON AGRICULTURE.

Presiding at the annual dinner of the Buckinghamshire Agricultural Association, held at Aylesbury in September, 1879, his lordship said that three

profits must be made from the land, and he thought it must be more advantageous to the country that it should be divided amongst three classes rather than be in the hands of one. It had given us for this country an independent class that had worked well for the liberty of England, and it had also given a less important middle class, which all wise men looked upon as one of the best guarantees for the security of the state. He referred to the wretched condition of the peasant proprietors of France, and said it would not be merely a great danger to ourselves, but a great danger to England, if the farming class were to be reduced in numbers and in influence. No doubt there is a party in England, he did not believe they were a numerous party, but however it was a party, who have always regarded with feelings of hostility the agricultural interests of this country. They have done so because they are opposed to the free and aristocratic government that still prevails in the country (cheers), because they believe it is the agricultural interest that upholds, that intends to maintain, a free and aristocratic government. (Cheers.) You may get rid of us, but you will have either a despotism that ends in democracy, or a democracy that ends in despotism. . . . . A year ago they were setting the agricultural labourers against the farmers, now they are attempting to set the farmers against the landlords. It will never do. The gentlemen of England will always be supported by those who know their spirit of justice and liberality and affection. We will not consent to be devoured singly. We have stood together under many trials, and England has recognised that in the influence, the just influence of the agricultural interest, there was the best security for liberty and law.

A MEMORABLE ADDRESS TO YOUNG MEN.

We give a few sentences from a memorable speech of his,—not in the House of Commons, but in an assembly of scarcely inferior, though still, perhaps, of comparatively unmatured, intelligence. The assembly consisted of a rising generation of minds that were being cultured, and understandings that were being enlightened, which could at least appreciate such a character as Mr. Disraeli's, after the House of Commons of a few years before had so deplorably failed to do. The occasion was that of the opening of the Manchester Athenæum, in October, 1844; and of his audience a pretty correct opinion will be formed from the passing allusions he makes to them. Referring directly to the institution, in support of which he was speaking, Mr. Disraeli said, — and all throughout the cheers of the vast assemblage testified to their hearty sympathy and warm approval:—'I think too limited a view of the real character of such an institution has been taken even by those who were inclined to view it in a spirit of friendliness. It has been looked upon too much in the light of a

THE RETURN OF LORDS BEACONSFIELD AND SALISBURY FROM BERLIN.

THE SCENE AT CHARING CROSS STATION.

By kind permission from 'THE GRAPHIC.'

luxury, and not of a necessity. I look upon it (the Athenæum) as part of that great educational movement which is the noble and ennobling characteristic of the age in which we live. The impulse which has given us that movement in modern times is one that may be traced to an age that may now be considered remote, though the swell of the waters has but recently approached our own shores. Heretofore society was established necessarily on a very different principle to that which is now its basis. As civilization has gradually progressed, it has equalised the physical qualities of man. Instead of the strong arm, it is the strong head that is now the moving principle of society. You have disenthroned Force, and have placed on her high seat Intelligence; and the necessary consequence of this great revolution is, that it has become the duty and the delight equally of every citizen to cultivate his faculties. I would now say one word to those for whom this institution is not entirely but principally formed. I would address myself to the youth on whom the hopes of all societies repose and depend. They will be called upon to perform duties—great duties. I, for one, wish for their sakes, and for the sake of our country, that they may be performed greatly. And I give to them that counsel which I have ever given to you, and which I believed to be the wisest and the best—I tell them *to aspire.'* . . . . Such were the wise words and emphatic expressions of the young but well-trained statesman whom a prejudiced phalanx of wilful Whigs so unfairly and so persistently hooted down in the great council of the nation when he first rose to endeavour to inform and enlighten them on the patriotic policy to be pursued in Ireland, as elsewhere, and the neglect of which in that 'emerald isle' entailed on the whole United Kingdom evils which have only become aggravated as time has passed away, without their being dealt with save on that mischievous system of Whig expediency under which,—as being but a pretence of rule and governance,—it has only been 'a mockery, a delusion, and a snare.' The speech of Mr. Disraeli's that we have just quoted from was not a mere political speech, or any party oration at all. It was far more important. It was on social and material progress, and on the acquirement of knowledge in the interests of such progress.

A worthy compatriot, though not a contemporary, of Mr. Disraeli, on another memorable occasion, uttered sentiments somewhat akin to those we have extracted, when he said,—'By the disposition of a stupendous wisdom, moulding together the great mysterious incorporation of the human race, the whole at one time is never old, or middle-aged, or young; but, in a condition of unchangeable constancy moves on through the varied tenour of perpetual decay, fall, renovation, and progression.' Thus Mr. Disraeli was quite on a par with Burke,—and that, too, on a question, sound views, and an enlightened policy respecting which lie at the very foundation of good government, and the welfare and happiness of society.

HIS SYMPATHY WITH THE POOR.

It is hardly necessary to say that Lord Beaconsfield had no sympathy with disorder, but he declined also to shut his eyes to the fact that the Chartists had grievous social wrongs of which to complain, and that although their agitation was political in form it was really designed to bring about social improvement. How deep and real has been Lord Beaconsfield's sympathy with the poor may be seen in the pages of 'Sybil' and also in 'Vivian Grey,' but the fact of his assuming the position of public defender of their leaders at a time when such a course was almost equivalent to political ostracism is hardly less striking. One at least of his protegés has not been ungrateful. Thomas Cooper, the Chartist, having completed his noble poem, 'The Purgatory of Suicides,' whilst undergoing imprisonment in Stafford gaol, procured, through Mr. Duncombe, an introduction to Mr. Disraeli, and has described in very striking terms the remarkable kindness with which the future minister treated him, the generosity with which he devoted valuable time to his service, and the pains which he took to procure a publisher for his work. It is worthy of remark, as indicating the spirit and temper of Mr. Disraeli at this time, that it was by his especial advice that Cooper refused to cancel the word 'Chartist' on the title page. In the course of his account of his first interview with Mr. Disraeli, Mr. Cooper mentions that his host said to him, 'I wish I had seen you before I finished my last novel—my heroine, Sybil, is a Chartist.'—*England.*

THE HIGH CHURCH RITUALISTS.

The following letter, addressed by Mr. Disraeli to the Rev. Arthur Baker, rector of Addington, Bucks., a constituent of the right honourable gentleman, appeared in the *Times* of April 22, 1868:—

'Hughenden Manor, Maunday Thursday, 1868.

'Rev. Sir,—I have just received your letter, in which, as one of my constituents, you justify your right to ask for some explanation of my alleged assertion that the High Church Ritualists had been long in secret combination and were now in open confederacy with Irish Romanists for the destruction of the union between Church and State.

'I acknowledge your right of making this inquiry; and if I do not notice in detail the various suggestions in your letter it is from no want of courtesy, but from the necessity of not needlessly involving myself in literary controversy.

'You are under a misapprehension if you suppose that I intended to cast any slur upon the High Church party; I have the highest respect for the High Church party; I believe there is no body of men in this country to which we have been more indebted, from the days of Queen Anne to the days of Queen Victoria for the maintenance of the orthodox faith, the rights of the crown, and the liberties of the people.

'In saying this I have no wish to intimate that the obligations of the country to the other great party in the Church, are not equally significant. I have never looked upon the existence of parties in our Church as a calamity; I look upon them as a necessity, and a beneficent necessity. They are the natural and inevitable consequences of the mild and liberal principles of our ecclesiastical polity, and of the varying and opposite elements of the human mind and character.

'When I spoke I referred to an extreme faction in the Church, of very modern date, that does not conceal its ambition to destroy the connection between Church and State, and which I have reason to believe has been in secret combination, and is now in open confederacy, with the Irish Romanists for the purpose.

'The Liberation Society, with its shallow and short-sighted fanaticism, is a mere instrument in the hands of this confederacy, and will probably be the first victim of the spiritual despotism the Liberation Society is now blindly working to establish.

'As I hold that the dissolution of the Union between Church and State will cause permanently a greater revolution in this country than foreign conquest, I shall use my utmost energies to defeat these fatal machinations.

'Believe me, reverend Sir, your faithful Member and Servant,—B. DISRAELI.

'The Rev. Arthur Baker, A.M., Rector of Addington.'

And in his speeches he was always careful to draw a wide distinction between the Ritualists and the High Church party. For he said 'the most eminent vindicators of that Protestantism which they (the Ritualists) denounce may be found among authors who profess High Church principles.'

LORD BEACONSFIELD AND PARTY LEADERS.

The subjoined letter was addressed to Mr. W. Johnston, M.P.:—

'Hughenden Manor, Dec. 8, 1869.

'Dear Mr. Johnston,—The leader of a party in a House of Parliament is never nominated. The selection is always the spontaneous act of the party in the House in which he sits. It was so in the case of Lord Cairns, who yielded not unwillingly to the general wish, Lord Salisbury being one of the warmest of his solicitors. It was so in my own case. Lord Derby appointed me to the leadership, but the party chose to follow me, and the rest ensued. The same jealousy of interference with an arrangement in which their own feelings, and even tastes should pre-eminently be consulted would, no doubt, be felt if the leadership of a House was to be decided by the votes of those who did not sit in it.

'I make no doubt our friends in the House of Lords will in due season find a becoming chief, but our interposition will not aid them. They will be better helped to a decision by events.

'Yours sincerely,—B. DISRAELI.'

CONFIDENCE IN THE PEOPLE.

At the Mansion House on Monday, Nov. 9, 1868, at the annual banquet given by the in-coming Lord Mayor, Mr. Disraeli responded for 'The Ministers of the Crown.' After referring to the relations of this country with the United States, and the state of trade at home, he went on to say:—It would be affectation if I did not on the present occasion allude to one of the most important events in the history of England, which is now impending. There is no one present who is not conscious that within forty-eight hours it will be the duty of the government to advise Her Majesty to dissolve parliament. Under any circumstances, the dissolution of parliament is an important event, though on the present occasion circumstances render the event of far greater importance than usual, because, dissolving parliament, Her Majesty will appeal to those greatly enlarged constituencies which are the consequence of the late Reform Act. There has been some discussion as to whom the country is indebted to for passing that measure. (Cheers.) I am not going to enter into that controversy; my colleagues and myself are completely satisfied with the fact that the Act has been passed. We are perfectly satisfied that, after a long controversy, a settlement has been brought about, on the principles which are a recurrence to the ancient privileges of the British constitution, and which have, in our opinion, remedied the contracted sectarian settlement of 1832.

(Cheers.) We have perfect confidence that the great body of the people who will now be called to exercise the suffrage will elect a wise and patriotic parliament. . . . When I alluded to the probability of my returning thanks to this toast next year, I may have taken a too sanguine view of the state of the country, or rather of the government, but I must say that I have confidence that the people in their exercise of the suffrage will arrive at a just and a fair conclusion, and under these circumstances I hope that whatever may be my conviction, no one will question my right to entertain it. For the last six months we have been satiated with rampant prophecies of that which is about to occur; but when it has occurred we shall be best able to decide with respect to their truth. Neither my colleagues nor myself think that we shall advance the solution of that great problem by announcing our opinion of what is to accrue. We have never found that boastfulness or braggadocia are of the slightest utility. Our opponents have settled everything. They have exhausted the arts of anonymous discord, but I think that I have read somewhere that it is the custom of undisciplined hosts on the eve of a battle to anticipate their success 'by horrid shouts and hideous yells,' by the clangour of cymbals, the beating of terrible drums, and shrieks and din of barbaric horns; but in spite of all this it is sometimes found that the victory is not for them, but those who are calm and collected, to those who have arms of precision, although they have made no boast. The fight will soon commence; the great combat will soon take place. It has been said of the government that we have no policy; it is a very ample one. It is to maintain the constitution of the country. (Loud cheers.)

LORD GEORGE BENTINCK.

There is now no reason why it should be any longer concealed that in order to give Mr. Disraeli a taste for horseracing, Lord George insisted that, in conjunction with himself, he should become half owner of a couple of thoroughbreds. John Kent was at the time the sole repository of the secret; and the names of the horses—we believe they both turned out to be worthless—were and are known to him alone. It can hardly be pretended that Mr. Disraeli shared his noble friend's judgment in horseflesh, or that his estimate of a 'likely yearling' was of much value to the purchaser of Bay Middleton and Crucifix, and the breeder of Miss Elis and Surplice. But on the other hand, Mr. Disraeli was—as many of his novels show—not without his own conceptions as to the fairest specimens of the 'noble animal' that were to be found upon earth; nor is it necessary to add that secretly he held the English thoroughbred in slight esteem as compared with 'the white stallions of Anatolia,' to which he renders homage in his 'Wondrous Tale of Alroy,' or, again, as compared with Sidonia's oriental mare 'the Daughter of the Star,' who 'stood before Coningsby with her sinewy shape of matchless symmetry, her burnished skin, black mane, legs like

those of an antelope, her little ears, dark speaking eye, and tail worthy of a Pasha.' We fear that the description of the memorable steeple-chase in 'Coningsby,' which Sidonia won upon his beautiful 'Daughter of the Star,' would hardly pass muster with British sportsmen who regard Whyte Melville's sketch of a brilliant run across country in 'The Brookes of Bridlemere,' as not to be surpassed; but, at any rate Mr. Disraeli's half-ownership of a couple of thoroughbreds with Lord George Bentinck, and his appreciation of Sidonia's invincible steed, prove that the motto adopted for his 'Endymion' by Lord Beaconsfield—'*Quicquid agunt homines*'—included the pastimes of horse-racing and fox-hunting among the subjects possessing no slight interest for the human race.—*Daily Telegraph.*

FOX-HUNTING.

Once and once only, it is upon record that Lord Beaconsfield went out fox-hunting. He was on a visit to the country house of his life-long friend the late Lord Galway, at Serlby Hall, near Bawtry, in Nottinghamshire; and to north countrymen it is hardly necessary to add that few more sporting packs existed at that time north of Trent than that of which Lord Galway was the master. Upon the same principle which actuates statesmen and men of letters who, with little taste for or comprehension of the sport, make up their minds 'to see the Derby at Epsom once in their lives,' Lord Beaconsfield was persuaded by Lord Galway 'to accept a mount with the foxhounds' upon the following day. Seated upon 'a safe conveyance,' but without exhibiting any of the dashing horsemanship which characterised his ideal 'Sidonia,' Lord Beaconsfield from a distance surveyed the scene presented by an ordinary day's foxhunting; but it was remarked by some who closely observed his bearing upon that memorable occasion that to all appearance 'his eyes were with his heart, and that was far away.'—*Daily Telegraph.*

TWO PECULIARITIES.

. . . . Two remarkable peculiarities appear in Mr. Disraeli's political career. He supported every motion, by whomsoever made, which had for its object the bettering of the condition of the working classes. He systematically abstained from touching questions which affected the Church either in England or in Ireland. He gave no vote for damaging the great national institution in any way, but he declined, so to speak, to legislate about it. Again, in him Lord Ashley found a steady supporter in his noble efforts to restrict the hours of labour in factories, and to guard women and children from being worked in mines like beasts of burthen. Not once was Lord Ashley sustained by a vote from Mr. Cobden or Mr. Bright. Not often did he find in Sir R. Peel or Sir J. Graham willing supporters. Again, while Mr. Gladstone was speaking

and voting against every proposal to interfere with the Established Church in Ireland, Mr. Disraeli's name never once appears in the lists of a division. When, indeed, it was proposed by the Opposition to go into committee for the purpose of inquiring into the general state of Ireland, that attempt to embarrass the government he resisted. But he took no part whatever in settling whether there should be more or fewer bishops—more or fewer amalgamations of parishes. So, also, in disputes about the possession, by rival sects of Dissenters, of chapels, and other endowments, which they called upon parliament to settle for them, he took no share. There is something very suggestive in all this. It seems as if already he looked forward to the day when he should be called upon to take a prominent part in the adjustment of religious difficulties; and, more prudent than his rival, he was determined to approach the subject when constrained to do so, unfettered by pledges, which are easily given, but which it is hard to withdraw again except with discredit.—*Blackwood's Magazine*, August, 1868.

LORD BEACONSFIELD ON ART.

His Lordship, as we have had occasion to show, was quite as happy in his speeches on non-political as on political subjects, inasmuch as they were always concise, and embodied not a mere string of platitudes, but sensible and instructive criticisms. One of the best of his efforts of this description was made in May, 1879, when he attended the Royal Academy banquet. Full of encouragement to artists, and showing a warm and genuine appreciation of their labours, was the speech he made in responding to the toast of 'Her Majesty's ministers.' He said, 'It is not in the power of any individual, or even of a government, to exercise any very great influence on the progress of the fine arts. The least we can do, we can afford to the artists our sympathy, and of their works our admiration; and I, on the part of my colleagues, have no hesitation in saying that if the time ever comes when there is a government in this country that does not recognise that the cultivation of the fine arts is happiness and welfare to the people, then I think one of the seeds of political decay will have been sown in this country. I ask myself, why should not English art succeed in the highest departments of invention? It is acknowledged that we have pictures which, so far as the command of the pencil and the brush is concerned, need fear no rivalry with any living school; but it is always added, that however admirable their performances, they have not the inspiration of the great masters of Greece and Italy, and they have not the inspiration because they do not possess a religion so poetic or so gorgeous as that which inspired those masters, and that they cannot seek a similar inspiration in our severer faith.' He went on to point out that their religion was the source of their inspiration, because it was the source of their common sympathy; but England was a great

country, with a vast and ancient history, and he saw no reason why the history of a country like the United Kingdom should not inspire the pencils of our admirable artists as well as the legends of a church or a religion.

LORD BEACONSFIELD ON TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

In distributing the prizes in the July following to the successful exhibitors at the Westminster Industrial Exhibition, he made some remarks on the importance of technical education, and said the greatest inducement ought to be given to complete that education, and to understand that in the best material and in the best workmanship they alone could maintain the superiority which once was, and he hoped would be again, the pride of this country. At the same time he did not wish it to be supposed that he looked on that excellence to be merely mechanical. Whether they be arts of utility or arts of design, 'it is impossible,' he said, 'to attain excellence unless there is feeling; and however successful may be the manipulation, without feeling you will not accomplish your purpose.' There may be taste, and even genius, in the fancy of a button or the construction of a buckle.

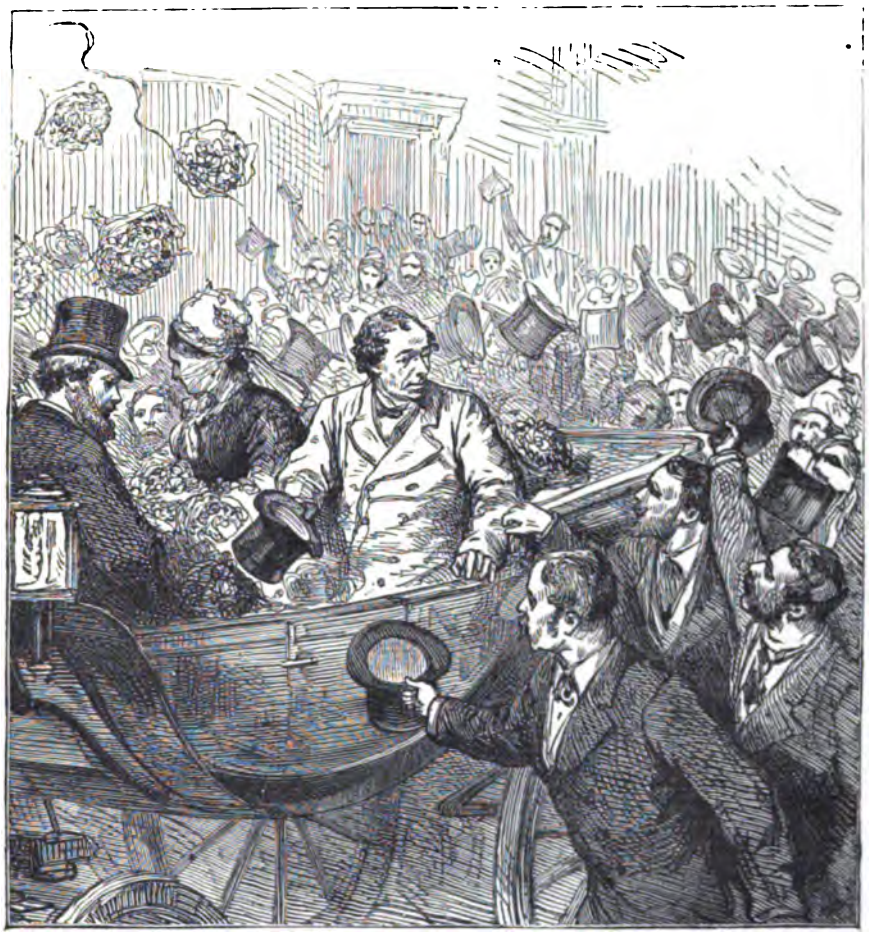
LAST SPEECH IN THE COMMONS.

The last speech Mr. Disraeli ever made in the House of Commons was in the summer of 1876, in reply to Sir William Harcourt and the Hon. Evelyn Ashley, who had criticised the government and the ambassador at Constantinople, Sir Henry Elliot, for neglecting to protest against the Bulgarian massacres. Mr. Disraeli emphatically refuted the theory that the British government should be held to be responsible for whatever might occur in Turkey, and he went on to say that 'Whatever might be the fate of the eastern part of Europe, it would be arrogant for me to speculate upon it, and if I had any thoughts upon the subject I trust I should not be so imprudent, so indiscreet, as to take this opportunity to express them; but I am sure that so long as England is ruled by English parties who understand the principles on which our empire is founded, and who resolve to maintain that empire, our influence in that part of the world can never be looked upon with indifference. The present is a state of affairs which requires the most vigilant examination and the most careful management.' Having thus shown how critical was the position which ministers occupied, and how absolutely essential it was that they should not be blinded by passion, or excited into dangerous interference by sensational and exaggerated theories, Mr. Disraeli pointed out that the great object which the government had in view, whilst deprecating and detesting anything in the nature of outrage, was the interests of the British nation,—a noble and sensible policy which on another occasion he aptly and forcibly described as a policy which, though it had been characterised as selfish,

was only as selfish as patriotism. He said, 'Those who suppose that England ever would uphold, or at this moment is upholding Turkey, from blind superstition or from a want of sympathy with the high aspirations of humanity, are deceived. What our duty is at this critical moment is to maintain the empire of England, nor will we ever agree to any step, though it may obtain for the moment comparative quiet and a false prosperity, that hazards the existence of the empire.' It was with such brave words as these, with a declaration thoroughly in accordance with the policy he had always followed, and the principles he had consistently advocated throughout a long and arduous parliamentary career; it was with such words on his lips that Mr. Disraeli bade farewell to the eminent assembly of which he had been so brilliant a member and so bright an ornament.

THE BERLIN CONGRESS.

The announcement of his intention to act as one of the British plenipotentiaries at the great Congress of Berlin created great interest, and elicited the warmest approval of the public. He left London by a special train for the continent amidst the hearty plaudits of a large crowd who had assembled to witness his departure. He was accompanied by his private secretary, Mr. Montagu Corry, and was received on the platform by Viscount Barrington, M.P., Mr. Chaplin, M.P., Sir Henry Drummond-Wolff, and other political notabilities. The Conference continued until July 13th, having lasted exactly a month. On the last day of meeting, Lord Beaconsfield, who was suffering from gout, entered the room leaning upon a stick, whilst Prince Gortschakoff, who had been in failing health for some time, was carried in by his attendants. The work of signing occupied about an hour, after which the plenipotentiaries exchanged autographs and photographs. Prince Bismarck made a farewell speech, expressing great satisfaction at the successful result of their labours, and the consequent preservation of the peace of Europe. At night a state banquet on a scale of great splendour was held. Lord Beaconsfield sat on the right of Prince Bismarck, with Count Schouvaloff on the left. On Lord Beaconsfield's return from the continent, he was received at Dover with great acclamation, but the most brilliant reception was that which awaited him in London, at Charing Cross Station and along the line of route to his official residence in Downing Street. We are enabled, by the courtesy of the proprietors of the *Graphic*, to present two most interesting engravings of the historical scene. It was a scene which those who witnessed it will not readily forget; for it was a genuine outburst of public gratitude and delight,—delight at the preservation of 'peace with honour,' and gratitude to the statesmen who had won in the Conference Chamber peaceful victories as enduring, if not as glorious, as those of the battle field.



THE RETURN FROM BERLIN.

SCENE OUTSIDE THE STATION.

By kind permission from 'THE GRAPHIC.'

We may venture to introduce here an extract from a letter written by a lady to a friend shortly after Lord Beaconsfield's return from Berlin, and published, we believe, in a Shrewsbury paper. It gives a very able and graphic description of the famous scene:—

'As soon as we heard that the day of Lord Beaconsfield's arrival had been fixed, we made up our minds to be in some way or another spectators of his reception by the Londoners. Cold water was thrown on our proposal by some of our Liberal relations, the masculine portion of whom flatly refused to be our escort, declaring that if anything approaching a demonstration took place it would only be the work of an idle rabble, gathered from the worst parts of the great city. However, nothing daunted, we sallied forth alone, and not for many a long day will these recreant relations of ours cease to be told how vastly the event differed from their predictions. We entered Parliament-street looking

vainly for the expected crowd of the "great unwashed," instead of whom we saw multitudes of eager men and women, whose dress and bearing proclaimed their immaculate respectability. Various classes were there, from "lords and ladies," and country M.P.'s, down to artizans and labourers; and order, good-temper, and courtesy everywhere. Here I should tell you that the glowing descriptions that the papers occasionally give of decorations by means of scarlet cloth are not at all justified by the reality, which in this instance consisted simply of dabs of scarlet cloth, the size of a pillow case, hanging from the windows. The real decoration of the streets was formed by the people themselves—a decoration than which nothing could be finer, or, I should think, more gratifying to him whom the people intended to honour. Lord Beaconsfield's house opposite the Foreign Office is about the dingiest little habitation I have seen out of Seven Dials. Not much oriental splendour about it, judging from the exterior. I must not forget to tell you that while waiting in Downing-street we saw the Queen's basket of flowers being carried to the house, a very charming way of welcoming her illustrious subject. Whether there were any strawberry leaves in it, deponent knoweth not, but she hopes there were. Anyhow, the reception the Earl got was splendid. I never heard cheering, or saw a crowd, like those which welcomed him home. The greeting was so hearty, so tremendously enthusiastic, it was worth all the wreaths and flags and arches that were ever put up. When one remembers that there were no extraneous aids to call it forth, no decorations, no music, no grand procession, only that little brown man and the great work he had done, it was wonderful! and so English! The great roar of English cheering, faint and distant at first, grew deeper and deeper as the Earl came down Parliament-street, until when he reached his house and got out of the plain little brougham, all the enthusiasm was gathered up in one mighty shout, and then a sort of dropping fire of cheering and clapping was kept up till he appeared at the window, then came another great roar, which so excited the unprivileged public outside Downing-street, that, in spite of their intense respectability, they broke through the barrier, which consisted of a row of mounted police and three rows of foot police, shoulder to shoulder. We hurried into the friendly shelter of the F.O., where we could view the whole scene without being squashed into a jelly. A rare scene it was! One I shall never forget; some day, I suppose, it will be historic. The gloomy house, the dingy window frame, the spare old man, with his wizened, sallow, impassive face, looking almost overcome by the sight of so great a welcome; handsome "Monty Corry" standing in the background, looking very much delighted. You can fancy what a welcome it must have been when a man of Lord Beaconsfield's iron will and gigantic power of self-control stood there with his face quite white and his features working, as though the intense emotion he felt was almost overpowering his control. Then came the famous speech, so concise and so apt, in which he told the people he had brought them "peace with honour." A dignified bow from the Earl, another

tremendous burst of cheering, and the window was closed and the scene was over. After giving vent to their feelings in an enthusiastic choral performance of Rule Britannia and the National Anthem, the crowd began to disperse.'

LORD BEACONSFIELD AND THE RUSSO-TURKISH WAR.

A correspondent of the *Sheffield Telegraph* had an interview with His Excellency Musurus Pasha, the Turkish Ambassador, who had the highest regard and admiration for the late ex-Premier. He says:—'I ventured to put to his Excellency a question as to whether the Berlin Treaty came up to Lord Beaconsfield's own desires. The Ambassador tried to fight shy of the question, "because" said his Excellency, "diplomatists have no right to recognise a party." But afterwards he frankly allowed that it was his opinion, had Lord Beaconsfield been allowed free scope, had he not been hindered and hampered by those opposed to him and by those around him at the time, he would have altogether averted the last war between Russia and Turkey—that he would have been able by diplomatic methods, by the mere display of England's determination to prevent an unjust quarrel, to keep Russia back from the course by which eventually she reaped so little.

'PEACE WITH HONOUR.'

Writing to the *Spectator*, Mr. W. Wallace says:—In the speech of Burke, on moving his resolution for conciliation with the American Colonies, these words occur:—'I mean to give peace. Peace implies reconciliation; and where there has been a material dispute, reconciliation does, in a manner, always imply concession on the one part or on the other . . . . The superior Power may offer *peace with honour* and with safety. Such an offer from such a Power will be attributed to magnanimity.' Considering Lord Beaconsfield's undoubted fondness for Burke's words during his latter years—a fondness which he gratified without much regard for 'context'—is it not possible that this passage may have been in his mind when he was engaged in phrase-making during his return from Berlin?

MR. GLADSTONE AND EARL BEACONSFIELD.

In July, 1878, Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury returned from Berlin, where, as British plenipotentiaries, they had taken part in the Congress after the Russo-Turkish war. On July 22 the deceased Earl received the Order of the Garter; on July 27 he was entertained, with his colleague, at that famous banquet in the Duke of Wellington's Riding School, on which occasion he spoke of Mr. Gladstone, who had denounced the Anglo-Turkish Convention for its insanity, as a 'sophistical rhetorician inebriated by the exuberance of his own verbosity, and gifted with an egotistical imagination

that at all times commanded an interminable and inconsistent series of arguments to malign his opponents and glorify himself.' The controversy which this well-merited satire evoked will be fresh in the recollection of our readers. Two days afterwards Earl Granville bitterly complained in the House of Lords of what he termed this painfully elaborated *tu quoque* on his colleague, whereupon Lord Beaconsfield defended himself, pointing out that the provocation had been given by Mr. Gladstone, who had taken the opportunity repeatedly to make personal allusions intended to be extremely offensive, especially in a speech at Oxford, where he had spoken of him as a 'dangerous and even a devilish character.' Mr. Gladstone was so hurt at the retort he had brought on himself, that he wrote a letter to Lord Beaconsfield asking him to quote instances in support of his assertion. The noble Earl gave a good-humoured but scathing reply which practically terminated the controversy. It was as follows:—

Lord Beaconsfield presents his compliments to Mr. Gladstone, and he has the honour to acknowledge the receipt of his letter referring to some remarks made by Lord Beaconsfield last night in the House of Lords, and requests to be supplied 'with a list of offensive epithets applied not merely to Lord Beaconsfield's measures, but to his personal character, and with a note of the times and places at which they were used.'

As this would require a search over a period of seven years and a-half, during which Mr. Gladstone, to use his own expression at Oxford, has been counter-working 'by day and night, week by week, and month by month,' the purposes of Lord Beaconsfield, his lordship, who is at this moment much pressed with affairs, is obliged to request those gentlemen who are kind enough to assist him in the conduct of public business to undertake the necessary researches, which probably may require some little time; but that Lord Beaconsfield, by such delay in replying to Mr. Gladstone may not appear wanting in becoming courtesy, he must observe with reference to the Oxford speech referred to in the House of Lords, which was one long invective against the government, that Mr. Gladstone then remarked 'that when he spoke of the government he meant Lord Beaconsfield who was alone responsible, and by whom the great name of England had been degraded and debased.'

In the same spirit a few days back, at Southwark, Lord Beaconsfield was charged with 'an act of duplicity of which every Englishman should be ashamed; an act of duplicity which has not been surpassed,' and Mr. Gladstone believed 'has been rarely equalled in the history of nations.' Such an act must be expected, however, from a minister who, according to Mr. Gladstone, had 'sold the Greeks.'

With regard to the epithet 'devilish,' which Lord Beaconsfield used in the House of Lords, he is informed that it was not Mr. Gladstone at Hawarden who compared Lord Beaconsfield to Mephistopheles, but only one of Mr. Gladstone's friends kindly enquiring of Mr. Gladstone how they were 'to get rid of this Mephistopheles,' and as Mr. Gladstone proceeded to explain the mode—probably the Birmingham caucus—Lord Beaconsfield may perhaps be excused for assuming that Mr. Gladstone sanctioned the propriety of the scarcely complimentary appellation.

Not unnaturally after this (as a writer points out), Mr. Gladstone, notwithstanding his indiscriminate condemnation of the acts of the Conservative Government, discreetly avoided the personal attacks he had previously been in the habit of making upon the then head of the government, and there is reason to believe that subsequently the feelings of the two statesmen towards each other became softened. Certain it is that when Mr. Gladstone was seriously ill the Earl of Beaconsfield called to make personal inquiries after his health. It is well known that Mr. Gladstone did the same during his great rival's last illness, and it would be ungenerous to suggest for a moment that the manifestations of regard were in either case insincere.

ANOTHER FRENCH VIEW OF LORD BEACONSFIELD.

On page 310, Vol. I., we give some portions of an interesting article by an eminent French writer in reference to Lord Beaconsfield and his policy. In 1880 the English papers contained a notice of a volume about to be issued by another eminent French authority on 'Lord Beaconsfield *et son temps*,' by M. Cucheval Clarigny (Duantin, Paris). This able writer thus summarises some of the main features in Lord Beaconsfield's extraordinary parliamentary career. 'What must be honoured in Lord Beaconsfield is not so much his elevation as the means by which he won it. He can look back with justifiable pride on the modest study in which he began his career as a man of letters. No baneful recollection stains the recall of his past days—neither an attack on the institutions of his country, nor an insult to his sovereign, nor flattering addresses to political partisans, nor pandering to electors, nor stooping to demagogues; and yet without any of these bad practices common in democracies, without any of those questionable devices resorted to by the wooers of universal suffrage, he has exercised a greater influence, wielded greater power, will preserve a loftier and more durable name than any of the servile adulators of the masses.'

AN HISTORICAL DOCUMENT.

The following is the full text of Lord Beaconsfield's warning letter to the Duke of Marlborough, and which has been already incidentally referred to in the body of the work:—

DOWNING STREET, March 8th, 1880.

MY LORD DUKE,

The measures respecting the state of Ireland which Her Majesty's Government were incidentally considering with your Excellency, and in which they were much aided by your advice and authority, are now about to be submitted for the royal assent, and it is at length in the power of ministers to advise the Queen to recur to the sense of her people. The acts of agitators, which represent that England, instead of being a generous and sympathising friend, was indifferent to the dangers and sufferings of Ireland, have been defeated by the measures, at once liberal and prudent, which parliament has almost unanimously sanctioned. During the six years of the present administration the improvement of Ireland and the contentment of our fellow countrymen in that island, have much occupied the care of the ministry, and they remember with gratification that in this period they have solved one of the difficult problems with its government and people by establishing a system of public education open to all classes and all creeds. Nevertheless, a danger in its results scarcely less disastrous than pestilence and famine, and which now engages your Excellency's anxious attention, distracts the country. A portion of its population is attempting to sever the constitutional tie which unites it to Great Britain, in that bond which has favoured the power and prosperity of both. It is to be hoped that all men of light and leading will resist this destructive doctrine. The strength of this nation depends on the unity of feeling which should pervade the United Kingdom and its wide-spread dependencies. The first duty of an English minister should be to consolidate that co-operation which renders it irresistible as a community, educated as one man in equal love of liberty and law. And yet there are some who challenge the expediency of the imperial character of this realm. Having attempted and failed to enfeeble our colonies by their policy of decomposition, they may perhaps now recognise in the disintegration of the United Kingdom a mode which will not only accomplish, but precipitate, their purpose. The immediate dissolution of parliament will afford an opportunity to the nation to decide upon a course which will materially influence its future fortunes and shape its destiny. Rarely in this country has there been an occasion more critical. The power of England and the peace of Europe will largely depend upon the work of the country. Her Majesty's ministers have hitherto been enabled to secure the peace so necessary to the welfare of all civilised countries, and so peculiarly a necessity

of our own. But this ineffable blessing cannot be obtained by a passive principle of non-interference. Peace rests on the presence, not to say the ascendency, of England in the councils of Europe. Even at this moment the uncertainty supposed to be inseparable from popular election, if it does not diminish, certainly arrests her influence, and is a main reason for not delaying an appeal to the national voice. Whatever may be the consequences to Her Majesty's present advisers, may it return to Westminister a parliament not unworthy of the power of England, and resolved to maintain it.

I have the honour to be, my Lord Duke,

Your faithful servant, BEACONSFIELD.

To his Excellency the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, K.G.

THE CHAMBER OF DEATH.

A correspondent thus graphically describes the appearance of the room where the Earl died:—'Up to the departure of the body for interment, the vacant chair which he invariably occupied remained near the table. The room was dark, and the coffin in which Earl Beaconsfield reposed stood upon the trestles in the centre of the room. At the head of the lid was a large wreath of white flowers, and below the brass plate which bore the inscription was a cross of white camellias and other flowers, while at the foot of the coffin again was a wreath, the eight handles being similarly decorated. In the room in which the late Earl lay there is a secretaire at which he usually wrote correspondence. It was recently newly finished, the late Earl having only entered into occupation of the residence in the last two or three months. The plain iron bedstead on which his lordship died has been removed from the apartment. In the centre is laid a carpet of black cloth. Those who knew the late Earl in life could not have imagined that he was over five feet ten inches in height. The coffin in which he lies is six feet in length. Shrouded in a winding-sheet of white satin, the body of the late Earl will be encased in a lining also of white satin, his head resting on a frilled pillow of the same material. Hardly any alteration is perceptible in the countenance, which has not even changed from the complexion during life to the ordinary pallor of death. The curl on the forehead still remains, and it is singular that, notwithstanding his great age, the hair still remains black, with only a few and hardly perceptible streaks of grey. The hands are reverently crossed above the satin winding-sheet, and during the night wax tapers are kept alight in the apartment. From the expression of the face every symptom of pain is absolutely absent. In death his lordship looks many years younger than he did in the latter days of his life. A smile plays about the mouth, which is not, as usual, rigidly fixed: and the eyes are closed, the whole face wearing the expression of placid and happy sleep.'

LORD BEACONSFIELD AND HIS TENANTS.

A most valuable testimonial to the late Earl was given by the Rev. Henry Blagden, M.A., vicar of Hughenden, at a vestry meeting there. He said:—'I never in the course of the twelve years I have been here heard one of

his tenants or one of those who served him say an unkind or bitter word of him.' (Hear, hear, and a voice: 'never.') The vicar then moved the following resolution:—'That the vestry of the parish of Hughenden desires to record its deep sense of the irreparable loss which the nation, and the parish of Hughenden especially has sustained by the death of the Right Hon. the Earl of Beaconsfield.' In speaking to the resolution, Mr. Thomas Coates said, as a tenant of the late Earl for a quarter of a century, he endorsed all the vicar had said. No one deplored more than Lord Beaconsfield the depression from which agriculture was suffering. He had several times expressed his sympathy with him (the speaker), and had said if he were to give him all his rent it would not meet the case. Several other members having spoken in the same strain, the resolution was carried unanimously.

GENEROSITY TO YOUNG MEN.

Mr. P. H. Rathbone, speaking to the members of the Junior Reform Club, Liverpool, the other night, said:—'A point in Lord Beaconsfield's character which ought not to be forgotten in a junior Liberal Club was that no man had been more generous to young men than he. (Applause.) He knew how to hit hard—sometimes in his younger days, too hard—but he never struck a struggling man; and he (Mr. Rathbone) had heard stories of him from those who had attacked him, but whom he would not attack because they were young men and had to make their character. He was ungenerously treated at the beginning of his life: he never forgot it, but he remembered it as a great man should remember it—by never inflicting the injustice which he had received upon others.' (Applause.)

LORD HARTINGTON'S TRIBUTE.

Lord Hartington, at Darwen, thus spoke:—'It may be said that Lord Beaconsfield is ambitious. I should like to know what man who has attained the position which he has attained in the political life of his country is not actuated by feelings of ambition. No one can certainly attribute any mean or unworthy motives to Lord Beaconsfield. We disagree with his politics, but we must admire the genius and the talent which the man has shown under the disadvantages which he has laboured under. I firmly believe that Lord Beaconsfield has had in view what he believes to be the greatness of his country and the power of the Sovereign whom he serves.'

THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER.

The following letter by the late Earl of Beaconsfield, addressed to Mr. Francis George Heath, the well-known author, was published in the papers soon after his lordship's demise:—

'Hughenden Manor, Dec. 28, 1880.

'Dear Sir,—I thank you for your new volume. Your life is occupied with two subjects which always deeply interest me—the condition of our peasantry, and trees. Having had some knowledge of the west of England five and twenty years ago, I am persuaded of the general accuracy of your reports, both of the previous and their present condition.

'You will remember, however, that the condition of the British peasant has at all times much varied in different parts of the country. Those of this district are well to do; their wages have risen 40 per cent. in my time, and their habitations are wonderfully improved.

'Again, the agricultural population of the north of England, the hinds of Northumberland, and the contiguous counties, were always in great advance of the southern peasantry, and, with all our improvements, continue so.

'With regard to your being informed that in many parts of the west of England the peasantry are now starving, I should recommend you to be very strict in your investigation before you adopt that statement. Where is this, and how, with our present law, could this occur?

'With regard to trees, I passed part of my youth in the shade of Burnham beeches, and have now the happiness of living amid my own "green retreats." I am not surprised that the ancients worshipped trees, lakes, and mountains. Sylvan scenery never palls.

'Yours faithfully,—BEACONSFIELD.'

THE VAULT.

The vault is situated at the east end of the church, and outside the building, in the churchyard. The grassy slope overlying it was railed off; and built against the church wall are three red granite slabs, two small ones, and a large one between them. On the centre one is inscribed the following:—

'In memory of Mary Anne Disraeli, Viscountess Beaconsfield in her own right, for thirty-three years the wife of the Right Hon. Benjamin Disraeli, Lord of this Manor, Ob. Dec. 15, 1872.'

On the slab to the right is the following:—

'In memory of James Disraeli, Esq., one of Her Majesty's Commissioners of Inland Revenue, and third son of Isaac Disraeli, Esq., of Bradenham, in this county, author of "Curiosities of Literature," Ob. Dec. 3, 1868.'

On the left hand slab are the words:

'In memory of Sarah Brydges Willyams, relict of James Brydges Willyams, of Carnanton, in the county of Cornwall, and Colonel of the Royal Cornish Militia. She died at Torquay, 11th Nov., 1863, and was buried at her desire in this vault.'

It was this lady who generously bequeathed to Mr. Disraeli about £25,000, 'in testimony of her affection for him, and in approval and admiration of his efforts to vindicate the race of Israel.'

A FITTING EPITAPH.

A recent visitor to Shrivenham, where Lord Barrington has his seat, sends to an evening contemporary the following inscription, which appears on a tablet in the parish church. The words are impressive, and worthy of being recorded at length:—

To the glory of God.
In Memory of BENJAMIN DISRAELI, Earl of Beaconsfield, K.G.
Brilliant genius, sagacity, courage, and perseverance enabled him to achieve the highest success in literature and statesmanship.
During a Parliamentary career of more than forty years he maintained a foremost place as an orator, held high office under the Crown, and was twice Prime Minister.
He died on the 19th of April, 1881, in the fulness of fame and honour, mourned by his Sovereign and the nation.
This Tablet is inscribed by his attached friend, George William, Viscount Barrington.
'Happy is the man that findeth wisdom and getteth understanding.'—Prov. iii. 13.